

FRANK COHN

Germany and the War Years

This Biography is dedicated to my heroic mother, who jumped without knowing  
if there was water in the pool - - - -

## Survivor and Liberator – Biographical Vignettes

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PERSONAL DATA:

The Cohn Family:

Frank Cohn: Born in Breslau Germany, August 2, 1925 at Israeli Hospital

Father: Martin Cohn, born 1/28/1886, died 5/14/1946

Mother: Ruth Cohn Tuck, nee Pottlitzer, born 10/1/1899, died 12/13/1961

Wife: Married Pauline Harriet Brimberg, 11/3/1948

Daughter: Laura Ellen Cohn, born 3/7/1964; married Peter Piscitelli, 3/15/2015

Residences:

1025-1926: Salvator Platz #1, Breslau, Germany

1926-1934: Kleiststrasse #2, Breslau, Germany

1934 – 1938: Guttenberstrasse #12, Breslau, Germany

1938 -1940: c/o Vallanos, 141<sup>st</sup> Street & Broadway, New York

1940-1942: 142<sup>nd</sup> Street, between Broadway & Amsterdam Ave, New York

1942-1948: 216 W. 108 St, NYC (except during wartime service, 1943-1946 at Ft Dix, NJ;  
Ft Benning, GA; Ft Jackson, SC; England, France, Belgium and Germany)

1948-1949: 102<sup>ND</sup> Street, between Broadway & Riverside Drive, NYC

1949-1974: Various military addresses (Ft Riley, KS; Ft Benning, GA; Germany;  
Ft Gordon, GA; Ft Niagara, NY; Ft Gordon, GA; Korea; Ft Bragg, NC;  
E. Lansing, MI; Ft Hood, TX; Washington, DC; Ft Leavenworth, KS;  
Germany; Vietnam; and again Germany)

1974-present: [REDACTED] Alexandria, VA 22309

Education:

In Breslau, Germany:

1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Grades in German Elementary School (Volksschule), 1932-1934;

4<sup>th</sup> Grade in Jewish Elementary School, 1935;

5<sup>th</sup> through part of 7<sup>th</sup> Grade in Jewish High School (Gymnasium);

In the US:

7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Jr. High School #43, 129<sup>th</sup> St & Amsterdam Ave, NYC, 1938-1940;

10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Grade, Stuyvesant High School, NYC; 1941-1943.

Undergraduate:

City College of New York, 1943; 1946-1949, BSS, Psychology & Education.

Graduate Program:

Michigan State University, 1960 -1961, MS, Police Administration.

## **SURVIVOR**

### **Chapter I: CHILDHOOD REMEMBRANCES OF GERMANY**

**Background:** I was born in August 1925, the only child to affluent parents, in Breslau Germany. That city no longer exists. After World War II the city became part of Poland and is now called Wroclaw. Here history had repeated itself. My parents were born in small German cities which became Polish after World War I. My father was born in Wronke, in East Prussia; he had two brothers (Hugo and Isidor) and three sisters (Rea, Jenny and Bertha). My mother was born in Briesen, in West Prussia and she had 3 sisters (Grete, Lilly and Else) and one brother (Hans). And because their places of birth became Polish, and because they did not speak Polish, both moved to Breslau where the marriage of Martin Cohn, 13 years older, with Ruth Pottlitzer was arranged by the involved families.

**The Good Life:** After the devastating inflation in Germany in 1922, when you needed a million Marks to buy a loaf of bread, my father opened a Sporting Goods store which was successful and he was able to sustain a German middle class household which allowed a live-in maid. Soon after my birth my parents moved into a very modern apartment on Kleist Strasse, in an upscale neighborhood. My parents now hired another helper, a nanny to take care of me. Our apartment was near the villa of my mother's Uncle David, who also owned a business selling clothing, at a location in the center of the city. His villa had a beautiful garden where I often played. His sister lived with him and there had been a problem with his wife which I, as a child, could not understand. Both were very old, but his son Ludwig, who was also a grown-up, played with me and that was what counted.

**Demonstrations:** Our apartment faced the German Finance Office which was frequently the center of demonstrations between the far left and the far right parties in the German Weimar Republic. I can recall, as a six year old, looking out of the window and seeing members of the Communist Party and members of the Nazi party fighting right in front of our house and the police responding to quell the fight. This was both exciting and a bit unnerving. Adults behaved worse than the children, what a revelation! My parents cautioned me to be very careful and never be loud in public: "Behave and don't make waves!" This admonition followed me along all of my life.

**The Murder of Uncle Max:** Also in the year 1932, I heard that my Uncle Max, who had a Kitchen Ware store in Chemnitz, had been killed by Nazis while walking on the street, when someone identified him as a Jew. My Aunt Else was now a widow and my cousins Fred and Ruth, who were a bit older than me, no longer had a father. It was an early lesson for me, and it stuck in my mind: Nazis were people who killed Jews, I was a Jew, and I had to fear Nazis. My father was not exactly sure how this all happened, but he stressed to me that I must always obey the law and behave properly in public, to set a good example as a fellow Jew. That again stuck in my mind. My father also taught me to respect the police and to turn to a policeman in case I ever had a problem. On my birthday I received a policeman's uniform to wear and I loved the picture they took of me wearing it. But just one year later, that was no longer such a good idea, since in 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and everything changed.

The Sporting Goods Store: There were a number of occasions when my father took me along to his store. He had a number of German employees and business was pretty good. The German population liked sports, with soccer as their favorite activity. At age 7, I too had played soccer in school, which I liked and I had also gymnastics, but that was not my best subject. In any event, I was very interested in all the sports items which were stacked in the shelves and I asked many questions; I liked the store and I liked being invited to visit – I was always at my best behavior while there, which was not necessarily so at home, where I gave my mother a hard time as she tried to make me eat more, since I was too skinny. One day in May of 1933 my father came home all excited – there had been a demonstration in front of his store by Nazis in uniform carrying signs which alerting the public that his was a store owned by a Jew and that they should not buy from Jews. His employees were intimidated and asked what they should do. My father had a long discussion with my mother and decided to sell the store immediately and try to get the best price, under the circumstances. And he did, but at a low price, far less than the store was worth.

Life Turns Harder: After the sale, my father looked for another source of income. He found a position as a representative of a cloth manufacturer selling bales of cloth to clothing stores and tailor shops. Since his income was now much reduced, we had to move to a smaller apartment on Guttenberg Strasse, in a different part of the city where one room was set aside for the storage of the bales of cloth. Those bales were quite heavy and I remember that both my mother and my father worked physically very hard carrying those bales from the apartment to the place of sale. However, we retained our maid named Bertha, who I loved almost as much as I loved my mother. Looking back, the sale of the store, while deemed a family catastrophe at the time, was probably a good thing, since it was no longer an anchor which might have kept us from considering leaving Germany in a number of years hence. Also, in his second business venture, the sales volume kept decreasing as more and more Jewish businesses closed down. This too seemed like a calamity and the need to leave Germany became clearer as the years passed.

Mr. Schumann: I had entered public school in 1932 still at age 6. I remember having to undergo some sort of placement testing where the tester counted lines in some configuration and, obvious to me, double counted some of them while I insisted that his results were wrong – that placed me in the good class, a class with only boys. I can't much remember about my 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, he was very old -probably 50 - but my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher was much younger and his name was Herr Schumann. He was a practitioner of the old German education system which stressed reward and punishment. I don't quite remember any rewards, but punishments did impress. For example, if you were instructed to write a short paragraph which had to have a title and you had to skip a line between the title and the paragraph and you forgot to skip that line, you had to line-up for your punishment. I was among those who failed to skip thus I was in line. I could see that Mr. Schumann exerted himself when he hit the outstretched hand of some offenders, but when it was my turn, the whack was not that hard – I could tell he really liked me! And I loved Mr. Schumann! So it was with much anticipation as I looked forward to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade since I had heard that Mr. Schumann would remain to be my teacher. But to my horror, when Mr. Schumann entered he was wearing the Nazi (SA) uniform with swastika armband and the NSDAP pin. Soon many of my classmates came to school with uniform items indicating that they had joined the Hitler Youth, wearing uniform belts, or straps or caps displaying the Nazi emblem. I made sure that I followed every instruction precisely, to avoid any disciplinary action.

Often, we were taught some of the Hitler Youth songs and while all had to stand as they sang, I was instructed to remain seated since I, as a Jew, was not allowed to sing the Hitler songs. This was not a healthy arrangement. I was lucky that none of my classmates took any physical action against me, but they were no longer friendly and I became isolated. Walking to school, I was chased by a number of boys who had heard that I was Jewish; luckily I was a pretty fast runner and I had a pretty good incentive to get away – they never did catch me. My parents soon realized that something had to be done and they enrolled me in a private Jewish school where boys and girls were together in class. In the following year, I would have had to go to the Jewish school anyway, since in 1935 the Nurnberg laws required segregation and all Jewish children had to enter private schools; the mixing of Arian children with Jewish children was no longer allowed. In any event, I now knew my place; I was only comfortable in the midst of other Jews.

Some Early Childhood Trips: Before I was 7 years old, my mother took me on many trips while my father stayed home. We frequently went to Berlin to visit her father Saul Pottlitzer (his wife, my grandmother, had died when I was 1 year old) and her older sisters Grete and Lilly, as well as her cousin Kurt Josephson, who all lived in that city. She also took me to Chemnitz to visit her sister Else whom she liked best, since she was only one year older; there I played with my cousin Ruth who was three years older than me and my cousin Fred who was five years older. Then, when I was about 7 years old my mother took me to the beach at Heringsdorf on the North Sea. There we met her oldest sister Grete with her children Gert and Erny, who were much older and did not bother to play with me, as well as Hilda and Fred who were younger and were only too willing to play. Children playing at the beach ran around naked; I was not too thrilled with that arrangement but no one cared about my protests. All those trips seasoned me to travel by myself. So when I was 8, my mother hung a ticket on a string around my neck, which showed my destination, placed me on a train to Berlin where I was picked up by her distant cousin Ruth Sussman while she and her sister Else took off for Italy. I was not very happy there. Aunt Sussman had two daughters, but they were 18 and 20 years old and they ignored me most of the time. The younger one, Lotte was extremely pretty and I was eager to be with her, but except that she once sat at my bed when I was tucked in for the night and read me a quick story, I had no chance to be included. Those were a very long, lonely two weeks where I learned to busy myself by reading. When I said good bye, Aunt Sussman gave me a favorite book as a present: ‘Emil and the Detectives’. I in turn had given them the mumps, which we all suffered through, as soon as I had returned to Breslau. By the way, I was never invited back!

A Ski Adventure: When I was 6 years old, my father wanted to take me to learn how to ski. We took off for a weekend to the Giant Mountains near the Czechoslovakian border. We were to get up at 5 AM to see the sun rise and then go skiing. But the weather did not cooperate. There was no sunrise since the sky was overcast and there was no skiing because it started to sleet. My father had a real problem walking on the ice that had formed and I had to hold his hand to help him get back into the hotel. It felt very weird that I, so young, had to help him who had always been helping me. I learned that adults were quite vulnerable and my father was also vulnerable and my security was a bit shaken. We returned without ever strapping on to our skis and somehow we never seemed to have a chance to do that again. I finally learned how to ski by myself when I was 27 years old, too old to become good at it.

Flying a Kite: I did have another memorable outing with my father. He took me to fly a kite to a small hill at the outskirts of Breslau. But I was now a bit older, probably 9 years old and Hitler had already come to power. We had fun with the kite and had shut-out everything else. Nearby there were railroad tracks and a train came by. I could see the engineer in the engine and he could see us. I waved to him and in a friendly gesture he waved back. The suddenly I thought: "If he knew I was Jewish, would he have waved back?" I never told my father of this thought, instead I told him that we should now go home.

Winzig: When I was a little older, age ten, I was sent to a farm for my summer vacation in Winzig (which means 'tiny' in German). The farm was owned by a Mr. Steinhardt who was a distant relative of my mother. His daughter Rita and her friend Margot Moses, also a distant relative, were two years older and at our ages that was a gulf of a problem. There were quite a number of boys my age at the farm and we helped Mr. Steinhardt in the field. Winzig was a place that took me away from the city where anti-Semitism had become ever more pronounced. We did not have to feel constrained there about our conduct, no one would point us out as "those Jews" if we did something wrong. We even staged a strike: When it came to place fertilizer into the field, there was a great eagerness to get out of the way – I mean way out of the way - that stuff came in liquid form in a tank pulled by cows and it smelled horribly; I think it was sewage. It was so bad that the boys then decided to go on strike and I learned what that meant. The girls sat at a window overlooking us and fired off some pointed remarks, making fun of us boys and laughing at us all the way. Mr. Steinhardt was not particularly concerned; that evening when dinner time arrived, he simply said: "No work, no eat!" The strike was broken the next morning. It was all a good lesson, a lesson that showed what was possible in a democracy and in freedom and what could never happen under a dictatorship away from the Jewish farm.

But a political lesson was not all that I learned at that time; the boys all discussed the 'facts of life', or what they thought they were – I thought all of that was absolutely gross – children could not possibly be born like that; but I never asked my parents about it and they in turn never brought up this subject in conversation - later I learned it from books. At age eleven I returned to Winzig and it was 1936, the Olympics in Berlin. We listened carefully at the radio and cheered for that great runner Jessie Owens since we knew that the German Nazis hated to see him win. Here was a very meager revolt against the State, which naturally was noticed by no one! We freely talked about the advantages of immigrating to Palestine; ironically none of the people there took that route. They either perished or ended up in England or in the US – like me, like Rita and like Margot.

A German Jew in the 30's: I lived under the Hitler regime from 1933 till 1938 and even as a child I could understand the ever tightening noose which strangled the Jewish community. The first action was that Jews who worked for the German government lost their jobs. Then, prominent Jews were taken prisoner and placed into concentration camps. Graffiti appeared on walls and in public places which simply had the initials JIKZ – and every child who could read knew what it meant, it meant Jews into concentration camps. The children might not know what happens in these camps, but everyone knew that you did not want to be in one of them. The names of Buchenwald, Dachau and Sachsenhausen became well known and understood; those who went in, rarely came out and if they did, there was probably a bribe paid, and they had to leave the country as quickly as possible. There were many stories about relatives receiving the ashes of those imprisoned in those camps. As time progressed many Jews wanted to leave.

Actually, in those early days, the Germans were interested in getting rid of as many Jews as possible, as long as they left their money behind. The problem however was, where to? Most countries would not take any refugees, while others had meager quotas and demanded payment. The US had a very harsh quota system and the US Department of State screened all applicants carefully, within the process, even the meager quota was not filled in spite of the mass of applications. Along with those concentration camp names came the names of the SA, the SS and the Gestapo. The SA were the first Nazis to appear, they became prominent even before Hitler came to power- in their brown uniforms and with their swastika armbands – they were the ones who had killed my uncle in Chemnitz. The SS came later wearing military type, black clothing, strong looking men who had been specially selected to serve the Fuehrer. And the most feared was the Gestapo, the secret police in civilian clothing, often wearing trench coats but always intimidating. That was the new Germany. As laws were passed, since everything had to appear legal, the noose around the necks of us Jews was tightened, yet there was always the whisper among the Jews saying: “This is very bad, but at least it can’t get any worse!” Of course, it always did.

The Change in Government: In 1933 the largest political party was the National Socialist Party, or otherwise called the Nazi Party. In view of that vote President Hindenburg asked Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Party to form a government. Once he took power, he never let go. He burned down the Reichstag – the German Parliament. The minute he took over, everything changed for the Jews since one of the primary actions for the Nazi movement was to eradicate all Jewish influence on the Government, in commerce and on the social side. At first it was to urge Jews to leave Germany, but eventually it turned to eradicate all Jews, not only in Germany but also in conquered countries and the rest of the world. Personally we had an immediate reaction in 1933; all the Germans who had been friendly to us cut off all contact. I had played with a boy my age, Peter Jonas, but no more. His parents avoided all the places where we had met and played. And from 1933 on, for us, as for all the German Jews, everything only got worse.

Hindenburg: I was in a children’s camp sometime in 1934, and we were woken up in a commotion among the staff. There were cries that Hindenburg had died. I was almost 9 years old but I did understand the significance. My uncle Hugo, who also lived in Breslau with my aunt Flora and two girls, my older cousins then aged 13 and 11; he had been a Captain in the German Army during World War I. That rank had been quite an accomplishment I had been told, since only very few Jews had attained officer status and none were higher than that rank. He told us all that General Hindenburg, who had beaten the Russians in 1917 and who was now our President, would always protect those who had been his troops. He had not allowed Hitler to touch his front-line fighters. As long as Hindenburg was alive, we Jews should feel protected. But now he was dead, fear started to rise within me; I did not sleep much that night and the next morning I asked to go home.

Michaelis: My parents had a good friend who was named Michaelis. I had met this man in our house many times and he had always been very kind to me and brought me presents, something to sweet to eat, something to play with. It was one day in 1934 when my mother came weeping home and cried out to my father that Michaelis had been arrested by the Gestapo, taken to Gestapo Headquarters and shortly later was found dead on the pavement below. The Gestapo claimed that he had jumped out of a 4<sup>th</sup> story window, my parents thought that he had been

pushed; his Christian partner now was the sole owner of the business. I heard it all and it made a deep impression on all of us. Aside from my uncle Max in Chemnitz, he was the first person I knew personally who had been killed by the Nazis. It was frightening and even as a 9 year old I had to question: "Could this happen to my father"?

Seeing Hitler in Breslau in early 1935: My parents were usually very busy with business matters as well as social obligations. And when they were busy, Bertha, our maid took care of me. When she heard of Hitler's visit she got all excited and was determined to see him. Since I was in her care, she took me along, cautioning me all the time not to tell my parents. She also instructed me to be sure to render the Hitler salute when he passed. I reminded her that Jews were not allowed to do that – I had learned that in public school when I had to sit while others sang their Nazi songs – but she was insistent and I was not going to argue. We stood on the sidewalk among hundreds of people and then came a convoy of cars, in midst a black Mercedes convertible and Hitler, plainly visible, saluting back to the people who held their right arms straight up and yelled: Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil!" I too had my arm up in a Hitler salute, but I did not yell. I was scared that some boy from my old public school might see me and report that there was a Jew rendering a Hitler salute. But no one saw me, no one knew that a Jew was in their midst, except for Bertha and me; and I never told my parents.

Getting Ugly: It was not long after Hitler came to power that the population turned against the Jews. The JIKZ graffiti on walls were seen everywhere. Then the signs came up on the restaurants, the high-class ones showed "Jews Not Desired"; the lesser ones more rudely "Jews Forbidden". When you walked on the streets when Hitler was speaking, you could hear his speech penetrating from the radios through all the windows - people were definitely listening intently; also we Jews, with family assembled listened, since what he said quite often impacted us. In 1937 there were practice black-outs ordered. We had to assure that no light escaped through our windows and if we were to open the door, we had to first extinguish any shining light. My father took me for a walk during one of the black-outs – it really felt eerie and a little scary – my scare was about the darkness, but the adults were more concerned about this obvious forewarning of a war that lay ahead.

Being Observant Jewish in Germany: We were a fairly religious family but with moderation. Except for the really orthodox, the Jews of Germany picked and chose what commandments to accept and what to ignore. In the larger sense, it implied picking a synagogue, since there were two in Breslau, a Reform Temple and an Orthodox one. The congregants of each respectively looked down on the others. My father had chosen the orthodox one, where the women sat upstairs in the balcony and the men were on the ground floor among all the ongoing religious activities. But even though we belonged to the Orthodox Synagogue that did not mean that we were strictly orthodox. We accepted certain restrictions like buying meat from the kosher butcher, even though that was more expensive; we had separate dishes for milk products and for meat products and had two more sets for Passover to avoid the heavy task of purifying them from wheat contamination; and we did not ride the streetcar on the Sabbath. This meant that we had to walk to the synagogue on Saturday morning which was a long forty minute walk. But we did not wear a skull cap in public, only in the synagogue and we switched on the electricity (an orthodox No-No) since we did not find that to be burdensome work. Even as a child I could detect what I thought was a bit of hypocrisy among the more religious. Specifically

you were not allowed to carry any objects on the Sabbath which, to the orthodox meant that you could not carry a handkerchief. But since a handkerchief was deemed needed, all you had to do was pin it onto your clothing and then you were wearing it and not carrying it. Even at age 6 or 7, I thought that was ridiculous and I carried my handkerchief.

The problem of walking to the synagogue on Saturday became a problem after 1933, since many Jews were accosted by German hoodlums and were often beaten when they stood out as Jews, carrying their religious paraphernalia. My father got a large briefcase and placed our prayer books and prayer shawls inside, so that we would not stand out prominently as Jews walking to the synagogue. It apparently worked since we never ran into a problem.

As a very young child I was able to join either my father downstairs or my mother upstairs, but when I was about seven, I decided that I should no longer be considered a baby and therefore I should stay with the men. A couple of years later, I spotted my gym teacher in a seat not too far from us. I really liked him, not that I was so good in gym, but he frequently told us about his trip to New York. I was always enthralled listening to him and here in the synagogue he let me sit next to him; now I looked forward to Saturday mornings.

After services we would always visit my father's brother, my uncle Hugo, my aunt Flora and their daughters Selma (4 year older than me) and Margot (2 years older than me). Actually I liked those visits since I was included in their games and particularly on holidays like Hanukah when we all played together. But one aspect placed me in rebellion, yet without any luck; the girls always had to nap in the afternoon and since I was even younger my protests were always ignored - so off to bed, but no one could make me go to sleep. It was so boring and it always seemed so long. It was lucky that I could intimidate my parents to the point that they would not import the napping requirement into our home!

Boys at Play: After 1933, all my friends were Jewish; we played soccer, made lists of the brand of cars which passed by, ate éclairs and pickles, and had political discussions even at the ages of 10, 11, 12 & 13. There were lots of Cohn's in Breslau (we spelled our name without the 'e', while Cohen was more prominent among the Polish and Russian Jews). In my class was Axel Cohn my closest friend who was a great exaggerator, Heinz Cohn who had lost his father in a way no one was told, and the brothers Heinrich & Joseph Cohn who did not look like twins. Axel invited me to the meetings of 'Betar' which later in Israel became known as the 'Irgun'. I was very interested, since in their meetings resistance against the Nazis was discussed. We sang Jewish songs and learned about Jewish history, about heroic Jewish deeds committed against oppressors. Year later, I never learned what happened to my friends; they were all still there when I left Germany and that was pretty late in the game; chances of their survival were not good.

Soccer: I had many friends, mostly from the Jewish school, but they were all boys. Girls just didn't fit in; they did not play soccer but that was the only game that counted and, in any event, they did not like us either. On my soccer team were all the Cohn's (no relations) and others with different last names like Peter Friedlander who was my counter-par on the forward line. I wanted to be more like Peter but I was satisfied that I had the half-left forward position from which could feed to Peter at the half-right position or to Axel in the center to score a goal. The soccer game was always the highlight in our week. My other interests belonged to my stamp collection which gave me a pretty good geography lesson. Homework did interfere a bit, but I managed to go through that as quickly as possible. If I could confine myself to these activities

and within that small circle, life for me was pretty good. But there always was the outside world which could not be avoided. There were always adult conversations about someone being arrested, or someone disappearing. Even among us boys, someone suddenly no longer showed up – he and his family had fled the country. Our circle of friends shrank, but it was a slow process. Our soccer team still maintained its 11 players! Of course we could only play other Jewish teams.

Bertha: As I mentioned, Bertha was considered by me as if she was my second mother. I actually spent more time with her than I did with my parents. We went everywhere together. She was particularly anxious to take me along when she had to go into the dark cellar to fill up the coal bucket – as if I would have been any protection. And, looking back, she did things my parents would never approve. She thought that all those Jewish prohibitions were illogical. Once in a while she would take me to a restaurant and order me a ham sandwich with the admonition to be sure not to tell my parents – and I never did. At Christmas she had a small Christmas tree in her room which I had to help decorate and then she taught me to sing the German Christmas songs which included Silent Night in German. Overhearing my parents talking about the need to become more frugal, in view of the ever worsening financial situation, I heard comments that perhaps Bertha will have to be let go - I would immediately chime in with great objections: "This must never happen!" But here the government intervened. In 1935 a law was passed which essentially created a drastic separation between Arians and Jews. As part of that law, Jews were no allowed to hire Arians as servants. Bertha will have to be terminated. All this was not exactly explained to me. What happened was even worse. My mother came all excited into the room where I was with my father and out of breath yelled that she just had fired Bertha. Apparently she had gone into her room and found items of our silverware among her belongings which she was going to steal, knowing that her job was no longer viable. I howled that I did not believe what my mother told us and that I was going to go away with Bertha, but all that was to no avail. Bertha was gone and I never saw Bertha again - - -

## Chapter II: THE ESCAPE

Prologue: My mother asked me: "Should we just leave?" It was not a perfunctory question. I was only 13 years old, but there was no one else in Breslau, Germany she really could trust. I had no perception of the consequences my answer could have. I remembered my gym teacher's comments about New York City. And yet, it was not an easy answer, I had friends, I had a new bike, I loved my soccer team, but I said: "Yes, let's go!" There was my recognition that I was but a second class citizen in my city and that the non-Jewish people there really did not want me. There even was a fear about my father. I did want to leave! The seriousness of the basic question soon became emphasized. I was not to tell anyone about this decision, absolutely no one. That was harder than one might think. There was this allegedly 'British Lady' who had been placed as a renter into our apartment by the German government – my mother had labeled her a 'Gestapo Informant'. She had given me a couple of English lessons, but she was definitely one who could not be told. And then there were my soccer buddies. I had one more game left to play. I left my apartment on my new bike which had been my Bar Mitzvah present just about two month earlier, to meet my team at the soccer field. This would be my last game with them - I wanted to tell that to Axel Cohn and Peter Friedlander, we played so well

together. I passed the ball to Peter to my right and he set it up for Axel in front of the goal and he scored. A treasured memory! I really wanted to tell them good bye. But I kept my mouth shut. I was pretty well distracted and maybe, because of that, eventually we lost the game. I said: "See you next time!" But there was no next time. I never saw them or heard from them again.

My Bar Mitzvah: By 1938 my parents had started to run out of money and a way had to be found to leave Germany. My Bar Mitzvah was approaching in August and my father was determined to stay home until then. On that Saturday morning, we walked the couple of miles from our house to the synagogue, as we habitually did, and I chanted a part of the Torah and the applicable Maftir flawlessly in Hebrew; my parents were proud. And after we returned there was a party for me. There were many presents. I surely loved my bicycle, the BMW model I had always wanted which came from my parents. My uncle Richard Brodda gave me a gold pocket watch; he told me that it was only a loan and that I should keep it for him when one day, wherever we are, he would ask me to return it to him – I did not quite understand what he was saying and only understood later that he was talking about escaping from Germany. I was never able to return his watch, his fate was intertwined with the Holocaust. The people who knew my parents obviously did not know what to give me and I found about a dozen pen and pencil sets when I opened their presents. The ones who knew me better gave me stamps for my stamp collection, as did my friends from my soccer team. After the party was over, my father told me that he was soon off to New York to look for his relatives. Joy turned to sadness.

Wronke: To get some clues about his distant relatives, he took me along to visit his birthplace in Poland. It was a small Jewish community in a 'Staettel' called Wronke. There they spoke no German and I spoke no Polish but the kids I met were just great. There was a beautiful 12 year old Polish Jewish girl named Hannah; I immediately fell in love with her, but naturally I could never tell her that! We were there for three days and I guess that my father gathered the information which he needed. I reluctantly left Wronke, I particularly regretted leaving Hannah with no prospect of seeing her again. However, I had no idea that all those people, all those kids along with Hannah, would be killed right after the German invasion of Poland in 1939 - - -

Father in the USA: Within a couple of weeks he departed with a US Visitor's Visa in his pocket. We received a letter from him daily and sure enough, he found his relatives. There were a whole bunch of them, but all of them had been affected by the depression; none was in good financial shape to offer him an affidavit. When he left for New York, he was only allowed to take 10 Marks out of the country, although many travel expenses could be pre-paid in Germany before his departure. Those 10 Marks, worth less than \$10 in purchasing power, was not going to do much for him; he was at the mercy of Jewish Relief Agencies for financial assistance. They advised him that their assistance needed to be limited; he would have to return to Germany very soon. Had he secured an affidavit from his relatives, he would have returned immediately and we would have remained in Breslau awaiting immigration, which in retrospect was ridiculous, since it took about a 5 year wait. He did not know it, but luck was with him when he did not get an affidavit.

Two Frightening Visitors: Fate intervened in the form of the Gestapo. Two agents came to our door, asking to see my father. My mother advised them that he was on an international business trip and was expected to return next month. They admonished my mother: "As soon as

he returns, he needs to report to Gestapo Headquarters". My mother was devastated. She remembered their business friend Michaelis and how he died in the hands of the Gestapo. My mother sent word to my father surreptitiously not to return. She was afraid that the mail might be monitored. Two days later a Mrs. Griffith came to our door with a document that indicated that this lady was ordered to live in our apartment. She allegedly was British subject, but she was obviously instructed by the Gestapo to report on our comings and goings. There was one good advantage for her presence, she offered to give me English lessons; I accepted and received two lessons which became of real value, more than I could recognize at that time

A New Plan: What now? My mother faced a terrible dilemma. Could we just leave and join my father? The affidavit route was not going to work for us; we did not have time to wait five years. Could she get a Visitor's Visa for us and join our father - and then what? Would we be able to stay in the USA or would we be forced to return to Germany? And if so, would we still have our apartment, or would we be arrested upon reaching Breslau and placed in a concentration camp? This was a real threat, with the Gestapo at our door, Mrs. Griffith watching us and graffiti on every wall threatening JIKZ. A decision had to be made. For my mother there came another small push. The Jews of Germany were ordered to bring in their passports to be stamped with a big 'J'. My mother thought, it indicated that the next step was probably the confiscation of passports. Actually the Germans did not oppose emigration at that time; their main aim was to make Germany 'Juden Frei'- free of Jews. The 'J' annotation was actually requested by the Swiss government to have an easy way to identify Jews and keep them out of their country, right at the border. But my mother knew nothing of that. The fear of losing her passport made her go to the US Consulate in Breslau to seek a Visitor's Visa. There were no computers in those days, so the Consulate did not realize that my father was already in the States; she probably would not have received the visa had that fact been disclosed. Another complication was the problem that the visa only pertained to her travel, but did not include me. Completely out of character, she approached a German Consular clerk and bribed him to add my name to the visa. She now had the option for us to join my father. It was then that the question came to me: "Should we just leave?" She was making a very heroic decision.

The Get-Away: During the night my mother packed one suitcase and asked me to do the same. She took a chance and packed some silverware, while I decided to leave my stamp collection behind. I would have loved to have packed my bicycle! There were so many things I could not pack, but I knew we had to go. At 5 AM we picked up our respective suitcases and silently slipped out of our apartment, without waking up Mrs. Griffith, the suspected Gestapo informant. We boarded a train for Berlin. There my mother said good-bye to her 86 year old father and her oldest sister with her family. Her father died within a year, presumably when taken to a concentration camp, but her sister escaped with her family to Australia. She would never see either of them again. It was a sad good-bye, since the future was not obvious to anyone. A couple of days later, we boarded a train for Amsterdam. As we approached the German/Holland border, my mother cautioned me to keep my mouth shut: "Do not volunteer anything!" We had in our possession our passports, our suitcases, our money - 10 Marks each, prepaid 1<sup>st</sup> class return tickets on the Holland America Line, as well as two weeks of pre-paid New York hotel reservations. Everything else had been left behind. A German border guard entered our railroad compartment; my mother got very tense. He asked if anyone had anything from a long list of presumably contraband items and there were no answers from the 6

passengers in our compartment. Then he asked if anyone had a camera. "I have one!" My mother gave me a look which I could tell that she was ready to kill me; I had not kept my mouth shut! I showed him my box camera; he looked it over and returned it to me. There were no further questions and the train moved on. We had crossed the border. Was there any possibility of a safe return?

Holland: In Amsterdam, my mother had heard that the banker Rothschild was helping refugees. She had the address and went to see him, while I stayed with her cousin Kurt Josephson, who had fled with his family from Berlin to Holland. When she returned, her mood had changed and she was quite cheerful. She had received a substantial sum of money – I never found out how much; it never occurred to me to ask. We said good-bye to Kurt, his wife Fanny and their 13 year old son David. Their approaching fate were concentration camps which somehow Kurt and Fanny managed to survive, but David died in freezing weather in an open field, without food or water or adequate clothing, along with about 100 other children, as his father found out from other inmates. Of course, we had no inkling of that. He seemed safe in Holland. We returned to the train station to take the train to Rotterdam where we boarded the steamer Staatendam of the Holland-America Line, a ship that would be at the bottom of the Rotterdam Harbor a year later, sunk by a German air attack.

First Class Passage: The boat trip was a delight. My mother had bought these first class tickets since there was really nothing else we could do with all the money we had to leave behind. And there was the chance that we could cash in the return tickets if we did not have to use them. Now we could at least enjoy ourselves for one last fling. I almost became the ping pong champion aboard the ship – just one man beat me. There was a movie with Freddie Bartholomew, and delightful meals, except for one minor mishap. There was a bowl in the middle of the table which I presumed contained plums, a fruit I liked; I took a large heaping, but when I bit into one it turned out to be a black olive. I have never again touched black olives! All this comfort masked the prospect of what could occur upon arrival in New York. My mother was well aware that if the immigration authorities on Ellis Island knew that my father was already in country, on a Visor's Visa, we might very well be told to take an immediate return voyage. She again became tense as we approached the New York harbor. Sure enough, there was the Statue of Liberty, just like the gym teacher had told me. I frantically took pictures of that and of the New York sky scrapers with my box camera. And then came a big surprise. All first class passengers were invited to disembark directly to the pier after going through Customs; all others were diverted to Ellis Island for detailed examination. The 1<sup>st</sup> Class passage had made the difference. A quick check through Customs and there was my father waiting for us on the pier. What a happy reunion! Tears were shed! It was October 30, 1938.

A New York 'Vacation': The happiness did not last long for my parents. We were off to the Lincoln Hotel on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue for a two week stay. There were no refunds allowed from the hotel. At the hotel, my father advised us that he did not know how long we could remain in country. The economic depression was still in evidence and 'visitors' were not allowed to work. My father had always obeyed the law strictly and working illegally was just not in his nature. The Jewish Relief Organizations had advised him that their support was limited in time and when the visa expired in a month or so, they would not support a renewal and we might have to return to Germany. The future was indeed cloudy. But at my age, I could shrug it all off and live

for the present. The present was thrilling. Here I was, in New York, in a luxury hotel where the elevator men were helping me to learn English and allowed me to operate the high speed elevators. Of course I missed the floor too often and the Elevator Supervisor got us all in trouble. Then there was the Empire State Building with a great view from the top and the Statue of Liberty with a never ending winding staircase. And last but not least the Horn and Hardart Cafeteria where I needed a lot of coins to get something to eat. But the two weeks of luxury were fast coming to an end while the stark reality of our current money problem weighed heavy on my parents. For a total of ten days in the States, I was living it up, while my parents fretted since our future remained extremely murky.

A Day to Remember: November 9, 1938 was the date of the German pogrom against the Jews, called ‘Crystal Night’. A Jewish student had shot a member of the German Embassy in Paris, which served as an excuse to implement a prior plan to attack the German Jews. The remaining Jewish stores were smashed, Synagogues were burned, and thousands of Jews were arrested; a large fine was to be imposed on all the German Jews to pay for the damage. Every newspaper in the States carried the news which we anxiously followed. It was a great tragedy -- but ironically not for us! After that pogrom, no more Jews were forced to leave the States to return to Germany. President Roosevelt issued an Executive Order which allowed all in-country German refugees to stay on a permanent basis - our Visitor’s Visas were extended indefinitely. The timing of our escape was indeed a miracle. We were saved!

### A RECAPITULATION

Although we were saved, all was not well with our extended family. During the Holocaust, 5 out of 9 close relatives were murdered on my father’s side and 4 out of 18 were murdered on my mother’s side, while 2 survived concentration camps. Those who fled landed in England, Palestine (later Israel), Australia, Holland, Brazil and the USA. One misstep along our escape, and my parents and I would have shared the fate with those who had stayed in Germany. According to my research, had my family and I survived a return to Germany, we, along with the last of the Breslau Jews, would have been shot in a field near the Polish border, on November 29, 1941 - I would have been dead at the age of 16.

On my father’s side:

- My aunt Jenny and her husband Hugo Brodda were killed in the Holocaust
- My aunt Martha and her husband Richard Brodda were killed in the Holocaust
- My aunt Rea Cohn was killed in the Holocaust
- My uncle Hugo and aunt Flora Cohn with their daughters Selma and Margot fled to Palestine

On my mother’s side:

- My grandfather Saul Pottlitzer died in the Holocaust
- My Uncle Max Berdass was killed by the Nazis; my aunt Else Lichtenstein was killed in the Holocaust; my cousin Ruth Berdass (later Lubitz) was on the Kinder Transport to England and later emigrated to the USA; my cousin Fred Berdass fled to the USA

- My cousin Gert Lowenthal fled to Italy; my cousin Erny Lowenthal fled to Australia and was successful in bringing my aunt Grete, her husband Emil Lowenthal along with his siblings Hilda and Fred to Australia; later Gert also left Italy for Australia
- My aunt Lilly and her husband Carl Moses fled to the USA
- My uncle Hans Potter and his wife Gina fled to the USA
- My mother's cousin Kurt and Fanny Josephson survived the concentration camps; their son David died in the Holocaust

Others:

- My mother's uncle Herman David died in the Holocaust; his sister and his son Ludwig fled to Brazil
- Margot Moses (later Margo Berdass) and Rita Steinhardt fled to the USA
- The Sussman Family, we lost track of them

I have a class picture of my 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class with Mr. Schumann and the German students, some wearing parts of their Hitler Youth uniform – I presume that many, if not most of them, died in the war and probably on the Russian front.

I also have a class picture of my 6<sup>th</sup> grade class in the Jewish Private School – I presume that many, if not most did not survive the Holocaust; they had about one more year left to leave Germany, but there were very few places open where refuge could be found.

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### Chapter III: NEW IN THE STATES

A Greek Family: My parents looked for a place to stay after our hotel accommodations expired; they found a sub-let bedroom with kitchen privileges, in an apartment owned by a Greek family who generously promised to help us. We moved in and made ourselves as comfortable as possible for three in a room and sharing the kitchen and bathroom with Mrs. Valanos and her three children: Timmy, my age; Eva two years younger; and Nikki about eight years old. The kids were not too anxious to play with a refugee boy who looked out of place, wearing strange European clothes and speaking hardly any English. In the beginning, I felt like an outcast. However Mrs. Valanos and her frequent visitor Boris Baranos, her brother, were extremely nice to my parents. They knew we had very little money and Mr. Boranos insisted that my father accompany him to a local bar. My father hardly ever drank anything but it was hard to refuse the wishes of Mr. Baranos. There he would buy the drinks and leave the change on the table for my father to pick up; and when my father wanted to return the money to him the next day, he would deny that it ever was his and insisted that my father should keep it.

The whole family was involved in helping Greece in its effort to prepare for a war that was certain to come soon. Towards that effort they had little Greek soldiers with skirts which had to be painted individually. We were invited to help with that and my parents and I sat for hours painting the skirts, blouses, socks and shoes of the little soldiers. We lived with Mrs. Valanos for almost a year on Broadway, at the corner of 141<sup>st</sup> Street.

Junior High School: My mother had met a friend who knew the Secretary at Junior High School 43, located at 129<sup>th</sup> Street and Amsterdam Avenue, who spoke German. We had no school records with us and my enrollment was based only on my mother's testimony. She stressed that I had been a very good student in the German Gymnasium. At the end I was placed in the 7th grade 'Rapid' class, even though I hardly spoke a word of English. Math was not a problem for me since I had advanced in Germany beyond what was being taught here, but everything else was a problem since I could not understand what everyone was talking about. The teacher asked me to take the wastepaper basket around the room to collect some trash from a project we were doing and I went to open the window. That sure got a laugh at my expense and it gave me an incentive to try and learn English as quickly as possible since I hated to be laughed at. I pleaded with my parents to get me some clothes which the American kids were wearing, so that I would not stand out in my European wear; somehow they scraped together the required money and bought me a pair of pants and a shirt which made me look more American and I felt much better after that, since I no longer looked peculiar to others.

The teachers in my 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes, Mrs. Bollendonk and Mrs. Simon, extended themselves to be helpful. In the beginning they provided me with annotated pictures in magazines where they had spelled-out the name of the item displayed. I knew I did not quite fit in; while just about everyone in class would be helpful if I needed something, no one was quite willing to take me as a friend. To learn the language, I would sit for hours at our radio and try to follow the stories and the news; there was Sherlock Homes, the Lone Ranger and some creaky door drama among others which helped me along. The movie was an even easier way to further my English education, but it cost 10 cents, which I did not have. But one of my distant relatives took a liking to me and treated me to the movies almost every week. At times, even I was amazed when I was able to converse in English with a minimum of error. I finally felt that I had become a normal member of my class when a girl I admired in school came over to me and asked me to help her solve a geometry problem; that really made my day. Of course I was too shy to ask her to go to a movie with me, and all I could do was dream about red-headed Mary Cavanaugh – I'll never forget her name!

When it was time for me to be promoted from 7A to 7B another refugee boy joined the class named Paul Lederer who had escaped from Austria and we soon became good friends. At that point I helped him with English and he helped me with Science projects. Many years later, Paul served as a witness at my wedding; until he died in 2015 we remained close friends.

My parents had enrolled themselves in Night School and as soon as they were able to communicate a little in English, I insisted that we would not speak German while in public, the German language embarrassed me. Speaking English was hard for them, but I had a fit each time either one slipped into German while walking on the street. After a while they managed and actually enjoyed their progress with the English language.

One incident highlighted my refugee status. The filmmaker of a monthly newsreel "The March of Time" was filming a story about German Jewish refugees and one of the refugee organizations recommended me to be included. I was offered a non-speaking part. I had to stand next to a blackboard with my head hung down, with a teacher next to me wearing a Nazi uniform and on the blackboard some notation about how Jews were 'evil' and Germany's problem. It was all staged, yet it came out looking genuine. I received \$100 for this "job", the first money I ever earned. Now I thought I had money for a movie when no one was willing to take me, but my mother made me place it into a Bank Savings Account. By the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade I started to feel pretty confident that I could keep up in every class and be in contention for a good grade.

Then came graduation and my parents bought me a pair of white pants so that I would fit in with everyone else at graduation. By now I had regained my confidence and no longer felt isolated from American kids – I was, maybe not in the legal sense, but for all practical purposes, an American!

A Basement Apartment: Living in a one room apartment became quite tiresome. After the war started in Europe, in September 1939 my parents had received permission to work. My father secured a job as storage clerk with the Eagle Pencil factory and my mother was attempting to start a millinery business which was not feasible where we were living with the Greek family. There was now enough money to upgrade our living arrangements and a basement apartment was found on 142<sup>nd</sup> Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. It was a brown-stone building and to enter you stepped down a few steps from the pavement. In the front, the widows were only one half the normal sizes, since the apartment was half underground. But in the back you could step out into a small garden area and that was the part I loved. There were a few shrubs and we planted a few flowers but what really intrigued me were the ants. There was an ant hill in the middle of the lawn and I could watch these clever creatures for hours.

A Passover Dinner: Passover 1939 arrived and the Jewish relief organizations still kept track of us and provided us with three passes to attend a Seder downtown in New York on the East side. We took the subway and upon arrival entered a large hall with long tables and a very big crowd of people. There was a head table in the front where a Rabbi was trying to conduct a Seder service, but it was impossible to hear since most in attendance were not really interested in the religious portion of this gathering; they were only interested in the food. When the food was finally served it seemed everyone was out for themselves to get a hold of as much food as possible and there was no regard for your neighbor. We managed to get a little to eat, but I could see the horror on the faces of my mother and father, which showed that they did not like to fit into this milieu. And I came to the recognition for the first time, that now we are really poor and yes, money-wise we belonged to this group of people - but I resented it.

A Small Residential Improvement: By 1940 my parents had saved enough money so that we could move to a better apartment that at least did not feel like a basement. We moved to a type railroad apartment on 108<sup>th</sup> Street, located in an Irish neighborhood. It was not a very nice layout. You entered into the living room and then there was a hallway to the rear through the middle of the two bedrooms, then thru the kitchen to the bathroom at the end. It was hard to invite anyone to that apartment, except to the front room. My mother tried to do a little more of millinery work and posted a small sign in our front window. From time to time some lady customer would come to our front room, they would confer to design a hat which she would then configure and hope to sell at the next try-on session. But that work proved not to be very profitable since ever fewer women needed to wear hats. She then started to do catering work for Temple Emanuel, further downtown and on the East side in Manhattan.

It was not long after we moved in that I met a group of Irish kids who lived on my block. By then my English accent was quite modest and I was accepted as a friend by the group – yet I knew and they knew that I was different. Later in life, I often told my Catholic friends about one incident that showed up this fact. I can't recall how it started, but I guess we must have had some discussion about religion. Around the block on 107<sup>th</sup> Street was a Catholic Church and somehow a group of my Irish friends pushed me into the church and into the Confessional. I must admit

that I was scared. The priest asked me something and I stammered that I really was not Catholic and that I had been pushed into the confessional – I guess that was a confession. I was much relieved when the priest laughed and accepted the humor of the situation. Of course there was much more laughing when I exited the church and I was asked if I had converted. Among that group, I never faced direct discrimination, but it was always made plain that I was only accepted as a tolerated outsider.

American Anti-Semitism: For my parents it was a bit different. After experiencing discrimination in Germany they were always quite aware of anything that looked like discrimination against refugees or, worse, anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, even here in the States they did not feel completely comfortable. Hitler was exporting his hate. There was a Nazi Party headed by Fritz Kuhn. There were weekly broadcasts by Father Coughlin which attacked Jews and there was the ‘America First’ movement encompassing prominent people like Charles Lindbergh and Henry Ford which preached pacifism and reeked of pro-German sentiments; possibly 1/3 of the country adhered to some of its precepts. That was indeed discomforting. We avidly scanned the newspapers to follow what was happening, always hoping that better insight could reach the American public. My uncle Hans, who had arrived in the States as an immigrant well before us, had worked as a waiter for many years and eventually became the maître de of the New York Athletic Club. The Club did not accept Jews as members and Uncle Hans had to keep his religious belief secret in order to keep his job. Hearing this made my parents fearful; could this ideology go further with signs popping up stating “Jews not desired” – a too familiar ring. They were not reassured until the war reached us. However when Pearl Harbor arrived a great change occurred; suddenly the America First movement disappeared and hate talk against Jews was moderated.

The High School Years: As Junior High School graduation approached, the teachers urged me to take the test to enter the elite academic Stuyvesant High School. One of my teachers recommended to me that I should write on the top of the test paper: “Language Handicapped”. Obviously I was still not completely out of the woods with my language ability. I never knew if that helped, but I was accepted and found the course not too difficult. When it came to choosing a language, I became lazy. I had had some French and had started studying Latin when I left Germany, so I should have at least continued with my French. Not so; I chose German and of course that was a farce. I ended up grading all the test papers for the Instructor and got my unearned ‘A’ each year.

Stuyvesant High School was located far on the East side near 14<sup>th</sup> Street. To get there I had to take the subway at 110<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway, travel to Times Square, take the shuttle to the east side, continue on the East side subway to 14<sup>th</sup> Street and then walk about a mile to reach the school. This took almost an hour and as a freshman I had the morning session which lasted from 0730 AM till 12:45 PM and then the rest of the day was free of classes but not of homework. To make the trip more sociable Paul Lederer would join me, entering at the 96<sup>th</sup> Street station. He then eagerly hoped that a girl he liked would enter at the 72<sup>nd</sup> Street station – not that he ever talked to her, but he was happy to know she was there whenever she showed up. She apparently went to Julia Richmond – the ‘sister’ school of our all ‘boys’ school. That ‘sister’ business really meant nothing since there were never any functions scheduled between the two schools and we were too shy to arrange anything on a personal basis. Paul ended up in an Austrian Jewish Club and there he met a number of girls who he was able to ask for a date, with

them he had something in common – the refugee status- and that inhibited his shyness. He even introduced me to some of them and we ended up going on dates together – not exactly double dates, but rather group dates; there was not a 1:1 match-up.

#### Chapter IV: WARTIME

Slowly My World is Changing: On December 7, 1941, I was loitering in front of my house with some of my friends, when someone came running up the street yelling: “The Japs have just bombed Pearl Harbor!” “Pearl Harbor, where is that?” No one really knew. Pretty soon it became clear that we were talking about Hawaii and that this was an ominous sign for the country. But as far as any thought about my personal involvement there was no recognition - that was the furthest from my mind since I was only 16 years old. The next day war was declared not only against Japan but also against Germany. For me, that felt good; the Germans would now get what was coming to them. There was no question in my mind as to who was going to win the war. But the war became personal pretty quick. Our block started to organize and some residents volunteered to be appointed Air Raid Wardens; as a minor, I volunteered to be a Messenger. We received instructions and what particularly impressed me, I was shown how to manually turn off the street lights. Along the way, I was actually promoted from Block Messenger, to Sector Messenger and then to Zone Messenger, working out of the nearest Police Precinct on West 100<sup>th</sup> Street. I felt that I was contributing something to the war effort – I owed the country that saved me, I owed much more! I graduated High School in May of 1943 and immediately enrolled for the summer course at the downtown City College of New York, which was a College we could afford, since it was tuition free. The war was not going to end soon and I now knew I was going to be drafted. I was prepared for that since my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday was pending in August. I really had no idea what I wanted to do when I finished College. All my High School friends who also entered CCNY, like my friend Paul, were going to be Engineers. So I thought I would also be an Engineer and I enrolled in three courses: Math, Physics and Military Science. My mind was on the Army and without working too hard, I got an ‘A’ in Military Science. However the other two courses were an utter disaster. I misjudged the College scene. I had coasted successfully in High School and thought I could coast again. A big mistake! As the term ended, I managed a ‘D’ in Math, but I flunked Physics with a great big ‘F’.

Meeting Paula: Although I was a High School student, I could still go to the Junior High School after school hours whose rear doors were located on my street; there I could play ping pong with girls, a big novelty since Stuyvesant was an all-boys school. My friend Paul joined me and there were two girls who played with us, Carol Klein and Paula Brimberg – we called them Ping and Pong. We played doubles and we played singles together. Pong was the girl I really liked. She was a very good Ping Pong player but I managed to beat her all the time, not by much, but I beat her – well, she always disputed that fact and this was never resolved. Paula lived around the block from me on 107<sup>th</sup> Street. Pretty soon I asked Paula to go out on a date with me, just she and me. We went to a movie a few times and also for a low cost meal in a Chinese Restaurant on a 103<sup>rd</sup> Street, where she taught me to order and like Chinese food. To this date, she is responsible for my many and continuing visits to Chinese Restaurants.

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## **LIBERATOR**

### Chapter V: DRAFTED INTO THE US ARMY

Good Bye to being a Kid: My 18<sup>th</sup> birthday was August 2, 1943, I was drafted and entered the Army on Sep 15, just enough time to say my good-byes to all my friends and by then I had many. There were the kids on my block, Tommie Maloy, Jimmy MacNamara, Pete Ryan, Milton Cantos, Mary Fisher, the Christy sisters, Peggy Wynn and Julie Snowden – I really liked her but her mother seemed to be more concerned about my departure than Julie. And then there was the crowd of Paul's friends from Austria, Paul, Inge Thalhofer and Lee Neuer among others – I was really touched when Lee cried when I said good-bye to her and her mother. And then there was Paula Brimberg . I remember I called her at AC2-4442, but I can't remember any details. Most of the girls promised to write me and most did, but somehow I lost contact with Paula, which was obviously my fault since I did remember her address, 203 W 107<sup>th</sup> Street – somehow I just lost contact. Of course none of the men wrote each other, each had a role to play in the war, just like me. There was a group of us draftees who assembled in front of the Nemo Theater at the corner of Broadway and 110<sup>th</sup> Street. There I said good-bye to my parents, as I boarded the bus to join the Army. I was not going to see my parents or any of my friends for the next 2 ½ years. And by then everything and everyone had changed, it would never be the same.

Fort Dix, New Jersey: I was bussed to Fort Dix, which was a Reception Center for new Army recruits. Recruits usually stayed there for less than a week, to be shipped-out to their first duty station. Because of my status, I was technically an 'Enemy Alien', I remained in Fort Dix for over two months while I was investigated by the FBI. There are a number of happenings which I can never forget. On the first day in the Reception Center, we had to line up for shots – not sure what they entailed, but who would ask? A fellow recruit, in line in front of me, was acting up like a clown after the Private First Class (PFC) Medical Corpsman gave him his shot. The PFC called him back, told him to shut up and when he did not, promptly gave him another shot. My Army lesson at the time was to listen, even to a PFC, if he outranked me. The next day I was placed on KP – that is Kitchen Police, which was the routine for all new recruits. This was no fun; I was awakened at 4 AM and worked straight thru from 5 AM till 8 PM and I swore that I would try to avoid that detail as much as possible. In retrospect, I was pretty successful in that. As I can recall, I only pulled KP three times in my entire Army career, because I always managed to volunteer for something else, like guard duty, to avoid it. The older soldiers always advised me: "Never volunteer for anything!" But in this matter I did not listen; guard duty was so much easier, it never lasted that long and you were always guaranteed some time off after your detail. It soon became clear to me that I was staying at Fort Dix for an extended time. I went to see Sergeant Cheraux (I can still remember his name) who was in charge and explained to him that I had some Junior ROTC experience and that he perhaps can use me in a more constructive fashion than pulling KP. He thought it over and the next day he called me in and gave me an armband with a 2-stripe Corporal insignia, which made me an "Acting Gadget". One of my duties was to march groups of new recruits to the Post Theater to see the film designed to prevent sexual diseases. The film was quite explicit and there were instances when some sheltered recruits passed out. In my estimate, I probably was the one soldier in the whole Army who saw that movie more times than anyone else.

One incident was unforgettable. We had a shortage of toilet paper and I was placed at the entrance of the gang bathroom in the barrack to hand out 2 sheets of toilet paper to everyone who wanted to use the toilet; not a very gratifying job! But it all went pretty well with the new recruits who never challenged anything. Unfortunately, there was also the Sergeant in charge of the barracks, who had his separate room at the end of the barrack and he too had to use the ‘latrine’. I handed him the two sheets of toilet paper and he looked at me as if I was crazy. “Give me that!” He ripped the role of toilet paper out of my hand and ‘brrrrrrrr’, he must have torn off a dozen sheets. The next dozen men received only one sheet from me.

Fort Benning, Georgia: Eventually I was apparently cleared to be trusted as an Army soldier by the FBI and shipped off to Fort Benning, GA for Basic Training. My training sergeant was Sergeant Kingery, another name I’ll never forget. Actually his full designation by us was ‘On the double Kingery’ because whatever orders he gave us, he added the words: “On the double” - nothing could be done slowly! Basic Training presented me with probably the loneliest time in my life. When I received a pass to go into town, Columbus, Georgia, that city did not offer much, at least I never found it. I had no friends to go with me and I could not make contact with anyone there. I was still considered an ‘outsider’; I was not yet completely Americanized, as amplified at Fort Dix when I had to be investigated. I started to feel sorry for myself and that certainly did not help. I swore to myself that I would try to never again find myself in that position.

One day, in early 1944, I had to appear before a Judge in the Federal District Court, in Columbus Georgia to be sworn in as a US citizen; this provided me with citizenship protection when overseas. I had been in-country for over five years, but had not until then been able to shed my visitor status – actually during those years I was stateless, since the Nazi government had revoked our citizenship. But now I officially had a new country, I was a US Citizen! While no one really congratulated me, I did that to myself – it made me feel proud. It was a little more complicated for my parents to gain legal status. Sometime later, in 1944, while I was already overseas, my father and mother took leave from their respective jobs for a couple of days to go to Canada and then re-enter the States as legal immigrants, receiving their first papers towards eventual citizenship after another five year wait; the law was satisfied in that fashion.

Fort Jackson, South Caroline: But back to my Army service. Since I had had one semester of College, I had been selected, along with all the other soldiers in my Basic Training Company, to be enrolled in the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). No one had asked me if I wanted to go back to College, it was just arranged. Of course the program was not well thought out. By going back to College, I could not have graduated until 1946, at the earliest – was the war going to last that long? Well, someone eliminated that program when it dawned on them that the pending invasion needed Infantry, not College graduates. So, when I had completed Basic Training, I, along with all the other former ASTP candidates and some Air Corps wash-outs, was shipped to the 87<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, which was being formed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. I was assigned to an Infantry Company and we were engaged in small unit training exercises.

The 87<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was not the coolest unit in the Army; morale was low since so many had failed or been rejected from what had originally been promised. The morale problem was well understood and to enhance morale a General Officer was scheduled to provide us with a pep talk. It was known that he would ask the troops by yelling: “How do you feel men?” - and

we had to practice the reply: "Rough, tough and ready for combat!" When he finally appeared, sure enough, he asked the question. Up front in a measured tone came the practiced reply of "Rough, tough and ready for combat!", but much louder came the yell from the rear: "Piss poor and praying!" – We were all restricted to the Post on the next weekend.

Columbia, South Carolina: Restriction was not what I wanted. I had found out from my parents that my cousin Margot's best friend, Rita Steinhardt, who I had met on the farm in Winzig back in 1936, was a student at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. When I finally had a pass, I took the bus from Fort Jackson to Columbia and I found Rita. She introduced me to a number of girls my age and I had a ball going out on dates with three of them – consecutively, of course. Here I had found contacts and this was so much better than Columbus, Georgia. The feeling of loneliness was gone. Protocol at the University was very strict and I always had to report to the House Mother in the dormitory and had to be sure to bring the girls back on time before their curfew. Short on funds, I was only paid \$21 per month; we always looked for 'freebies' like concerts or University sport events and low cost food. There were also USO events for us soldiers which helped. But my dating-life was short lived - - -

No Purple Heart: We were involved in unit training within the various entities of the 87<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Physical training was one of the primary missions to assure that everyone was physically fit for combat. We started out with a two-mile hike carrying our personal full field pack. The length of our hikes was to be slowly raised until we eventually could hike 25 miles. After a 5 mile hike, I was designated to participate in a demonstration team for chemical warfare. The Germans had used gas attacks during World War I and we were not going to be caught short to defend against this type of warfare. I had been taught how to put on a gas mask and was asked to do that during the demonstration. To make the skit more realistic, the instructor had drawn what he thought were some smoke grenades. However, when he threw one at us, it turned out to be a white phosphorous hand grenade, a very bad error. Luckily my gas mask was on properly and the white phosphorous hit me only along the border of the mask above my ears and on my wrists; the instructor was hit full face. I took off running towards the dispensary just a block away while shedding my burning field pack along the way. At first no one understood what had happened and they tended to my obvious burns. When the instructor was carried in, he understood that it was white phosphorous and after he informed the medics, my hands were immediately immersed in a bucket of water and wet compresses were applied over my ears – that stopped the burning. I was hospitalized for a month in the Fort Jackson Hospital and when I rejoined my unit, they had progressed to the 25 mile hike target. I had not been seasoned like the others and after about 15 miles or so I was exhausted and had to be driven back to the barracks. I guess I became a soldier who they could do without, so when the Division was tasked with providing replacements for the casualties sustained in the June 44 invasion of the European continent, I was designated to leave the Division as an Infantry Replacement along with a small group of others. While I thought I was a failure, it was another un-understood instance of good luck. The Division sustained over 40% casualties when deployed on its first day during the Battle of the Bulge.

## Chapter VI: OVERSEAS

An Ocean Cruise: It was September 1944. As replacements, we were moved to Fort Kilmer in New Jersey. It was so close to home and I had not been home for a year. After three days at Kilmer you could get a pass unless you were on orders to move. On the third day I had my orders and on the fourth day I boarded the luxury liner St. Mary for my overseas trip – but no chance to go home, so close and yet so far! The voyage on the ‘luxury’ liner was generally uneventful, but it was very, very crowded. To get the most room, there were sleeping hammocks hung on top of each other in five tiers; I managed to get one on top. We were warned about the German U-boats and were asked if anyone wanted to volunteer for guard duty – I did and what a good move that was. First of all, it precluded me from being placed on KP; those who were selected found their entire voyage to be in the kitchen below deck, with only time to sleep and then back into the kitchen. Those without duties were always in line to be fed. In view of the horde of soldiers on board, only two meals were served each day, you ate and then had to get back in line for the second meal. But not me! Guard duty personnel were routed to the head of the line. And with three shifts, I had 8 hours of duty and 16 hours off, almost a pleasure cruise. The luxury liner made the trip to Southampton, England in five days, always traveling at full speed to enhance safety from any U-boat attack.

England: Upon arrival in England, we were moved to a replacement camp near Norwich and stayed there for over three weeks. Nothing much happened there and we all had free time, all conducive to getting into trouble. Most of us snuck out through a hole in the fence to get to town and participate in a local pub where there was dancing and throwing darts. It was hilarious as enlisted as well as officers were sneaking through the fence and to assure that courtesy was observed, we saluted the officers as they snuck through, and allowed them priority. The English population was very friendly and they loved our cigarettes – we could pay with them and we needed to do that since most of us, who were Pfc’s, certainly did not have much money. On one day I was requested to come to an interview and I was asked how well I spoke German. I told them I spoke German as well as I spoke English; that satisfied the interviewer; no tests were given.

Across the English Channel: Finally, the day came in October ’44, when we were told to pack up; that meant to strap on our full field pack, hold on to the issued M-1 rifle in one hand and the duffel bag with Army clothing in the other, partly slung over the shoulder. Off we went to board a transport to take us across the English Channel. As we neared the French coast, we had to transfer to an LST landing craft by climbing down a rope ladder and synchronizing our transfer with the ups and downs of the smaller craft – with all that personal gear it was a bit of an athletic achievement. But landing on the Normandy beach was relatively easy. It was the invasion beach where, by now, the Engineers had built a floating dock – we never even got our feet wet. However, the beach was an unnerving scene – all kinds of smashed military equipment strewn around, shell holes and broken bunkers; the battle scene had not been cleaned up. But there was not much time for sightseeing, we marched off to the railroad tracks and were loaded into box cars for a trip due East, towards the front.

Through France: There is little comfort in box cars. I did not count the numbers, but it was crowded, yet enough room to lie down. I am sure that similar cars, which brought Jews to

extermination camps, were much more crowded - but we did not know about that. There was always the incentive to get comfortable. The train stopped often. At one point the French rail personnel told us about a prolonged stop near Carantan. Many of us dismounted and ran into the nearby village to buy cheese and bread, using cigarettes for barter. Nothing has ever tasted any better than that cheese and that bread which I was able to fetch at that time. It certainly beat the issued K-rations. I'll always be thankful to the French railroad personnel who gave us the time to do the shopping and we sure ran at full speed when we heard the whistle alerting us of the imminent departure. The train stopped at Le Mans but that too was not our final destination. We met some French boys who were still too young for their Army but who were all excited about our arrival. I was now in my element, I remembered my French from school in Germany and with the limited knowledge I had and had remembered, I became the social interpreter. The boys asked us for our address since they wanted to write us. We gave them our Replacement Depot address but it was almost certain that letters addressed there were never going to reach us.

Belgium: We were off the next day into Belgium, a small village where we pitched our tents on a nearby meadow. Again I volunteered for guard duty and there was not much to do when off duty. By being on guard duty and pairing up with another soldier with that duty, we each had the entire tent for an 8 hour sleep, while the other pulled his duty. The rest of the time-off was used to explore the neighborhood. The town people were friendly and invited us into their homes. We brought them our rations and they reciprocated with their food – sometimes eggs and always bread and cheese. A widow with a 6 year old daughter had invited me in and with my limited French, I not only managed to converse with her, but I also sat down with the six year old and I helped her (or she helped me) with her reading in a first grade school book. There was a barn with a cow and a horse which was much warmer than the tent and on a few nights I slept in the hay. It was fun and I was sorry when we had to leave for another meadow further up into Belgium.

Chevron, Belgium: The next town where we bivouacked was Chevron. I got quite friendly with the soldier who shared the pup tent with me and with whom I alternated the guard detail shift. For eight hours we were together and started to explore the area. About two miles down the hill we discovered a house with a restaurant. We entered and the owners were extremely friendly; they also had two grown children, a boy named Raoul and a girl named Michelle, both about our age. We all became very friendly and the Belgium family loved that I could speak a little French; they spoke no English. We promised to come back the next day. When we did, the owner explained that he had a room upstairs, with a big feather bed, which we could use. By now it was late October and quite cold in that pup tent; it did not take us long to decide to take him up on that generous offer. We worked out a plan that we alternated sleeping there, in consonance with our alternated guard shift duty and should we receive orders to move out, whoever is in the unit area would run down to get the one who was sleeping. It was a wonderful arrangement and we spent over a week at Chevron. I woke up on a Sunday morning and took my time. Michelle made me some eggs and I slowly climbed the hill to my bivouac area. When I reached the field, to my horror, I discovered that it was empty except for a standing one-half of a shelter-half – mine! And all my equipment was neatly stacked up under it. How come my buddy never got me? I missed movement, a major offense! I was in deep trouble! I double-timed over to the next field where the Replacement Battalion Headquarters was located and reported to the duty Sergeant. I confessed my sin and awaited what would be inflicted upon

me. The Sergeant read the replacement shipping list and discovered that my name was not on the list. It was a miracle; I was the only one who was not on orders to move with my replacement unit. The Sergeant told me to move my equipment onto his field which I promptly did and we both wondered why I was not on orders. In any event, now I understood why my tent buddy had not come down to fetch me. I stayed with the Replacement Battalion Headquarters as it moved further into Belgium, but there were no orders for me. We were at some castle, don't know where that was and at the time I really did not care. It was now very boring, I had lost my guard duty buddy but I still volunteered for that duty – yet I did not stray far from my Replacement Battalion Headquarters.

Malmedy: A few days later, the whole Replacement Battalion was alerted to move to Malmedy, near the German border. Upon arrival we were deployed and had to dig foxholes; these were two-men foxholes which were meant to acclimatize ourselves to what will happen on the front line. Actually, this was the front line; there was really no other unit in front of us. But it was a quiet sector and no enemy activity was noted. Unbeknown to us, this was the place where in the following month, in mid-December, the Germans broke through, when they started what was later called the Battle of the Bulge. But here we were given passes to visit Malmedy. We went in groups and I was much in demand because of my French, as limited as it was and also my German since many in that city also spoke German. We met some girls and they invited us into their home. It was weird; they showed us pictures of their father dressed in a German Army uniform and they explained that even though they were Belgium, their father was fighting in the German Army - we were in the home of the enemy!

How to Become an Intelligence Agent: A few days later, I learned why I had not been on the list to ship out with the other replacements. The Battalion Sergeant called me in and told me that I was earmarked to go back to Les Vesinet near Paris, where I would attend a short course to become an Intelligence Agent, in view of my German language ability. All I had to do now was await transportation. Transportation came, but it only brought me back a few miles to the rear, into another small village, where I met another five linguists and we stayed in a large house awaiting further transport. There we celebrated Thanksgiving. Then we waited and waited and started to doubt if the trip to Les Vesinet would actually occur. It was the end of November when the  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton truck came to take us to Les Vesinet. It was going to be a 2 week course stressing interrogations and other intelligence aspects. It was extremely interesting for me, since this was all new material. However, after just one week the course was cut short for me; I was assigned to Interrogator Prisoner of War (IPW) Team # 66 and we were to depart immediately for Luxemburg to check into 12th Army Group Headquarters. The Team consisted of the Team Leader, Captain Remple; the Assistant Team Leader, Lieutenant Hershey; the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in Charge, Technical Sergeant Siegfried; two German interpreters, Staff Sergeant Froelich – nicknamed Floh and Pfc Cohn (me); plus a Corporal who was the Captain's Driver (forgot his name). We traveled in two jeeps with one trailer which carried all our gear and extra gas and water cans. Except for the driver, we shed our ranks and wore only the 'US' insignia on our collars. After just one week of training, I was now a fully-trained Intelligence Agent! It should be noted that most of the others, who I met later, had attended a six month training course at Camp Ritchie, MD – they were named the 'Ritchie Boys'; most were German refugees like me.

Paris: The trip to Luxembourg took us through Paris. Our driver had planned on a date in Paris on the evening of our departure and apparently did not want to miss out. He purposefully ran his jeep into a street car and busted its radiator. Of course he denied that he did this on purpose. In any event, we all had an evening in Paris. Flo and I teamed up and I had to exercise my limited French to successfully pick up two young girls. My date was named ‘Mishoo’ and she promised to write to me, which she did for all the time I was overseas. We had a wonderful evening visiting some of the famous restaurants; Floh had money since he was a Staff Sergeant, while I was broke as a low paid PFC, but I did contribute my cigarette ration. It was an educational experience. At one point I overheard bartering at the next table; someone with limited French like me was negotiating the price for a night – those very well-dressed ladies were prostitutes! But that was not the case with the girls we were with, they were school girls out for a little adventure with some foreign soldiers – us. Months later, I tried to get back to Paris on R&R (Rest and Recuperation), but was not successful, even when the war had ended I was unable to get back to Paris, not until years later when I visited Paris with my wife Paula.

T-Force, 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group: The radiator of the jeep was repaired the next day and we finally reached Luxembourg, checked into 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group Headquarters, received our 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group shoulder patches and left the same day for the small town of Remouchamps in Belgium, where the headquarters of T-Force (Task Force), 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group was located. Our team was assigned to this unit. Since it was an Intelligence Unit, we carried the cover designation of 337<sup>th</sup> Chemical Company; however that designation was used very infrequently. The 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group designation was painted on the bumpers of our jeeps. Floh became the driver of the second jeep, since I still had not learned how to drive (you did not need a car in New York!) and he offered to let me place a name along the name of his girlfriend; I said ‘Julie’ the girl in New York I liked best at that time – so the name of the Jeep became ‘Leonie-Julie’. We soon received an orientation about our mission. We were to prepare ourselves to enter specified large German cities as soon as they were captured by our forces and engage pre-designated ‘Building’ and ‘Personality’ targets. ‘Building’ targets were German government and Nazi party structures, as well as industrial complexes and utility installations; we were to make preliminary assessments for future exploitation by military government personnel. ‘Personality’ targets were important persons who were marked for immediate arrest and future war crimes prosecution. It all sounded extremely interesting and important and we hoped we would get some training in support of this mission – but that never happened. There may have been training classes for the officers, but such training never reached us. When we were finally committed, we very seldom had an officer with us and therefore had to act with whatever common sense we could apply. I never understood why necessary training was never offered, even though we had ample time between the end of the Battle of the Bulge and our entry into Germany.

Remouchamps, Belgium: The citizens of Remouchamps were extremely friendly and they offered housing accommodations to the entire unit. Almost every resident had volunteered to provide a room for one or two of our soldiers, so that none of us had to sleep in a pup tent. I received a room from a nice family with a couple of young children and Flo had a room in an adjacent house. It was now mid-December and we were very happy to be living in-doors. But we had nothing to do and were getting bored. There was no scheduled training, at least not for us enlisted soldiers. I suggested to Floh that we should hitchhike to Malmedy where I could show him the place where I had that weird experience of meeting girls whose father was in the German

Army. He was interested and we stopped a 2 ½ ton truck and asked if he was going to Malmedy; the driver said yes and to hop-on in the back. We climbed in and realized that he was carrying unexploded ammunition – too late to change our minds. But that was not the worst of it. We soon got stopped at one of our roadblocks and the driver was told that he had to turn around immediately to return to his unit; the Germans had broken through our front lines – the Battle of the Bulge had started. The driver raced back and he let us out in Remouchamps; we ran back to our unit. It was December 16, 1944.

## Chapter VII: BATTLE OF THE BULGE

The Scariest Night: As we returned to T-Force Headquarters, there was general chaos. Everyone was packing, to be ready to move out at a moment's notice. As chance would have it, the young Belgium friends from the town of Chevron had heard that I was in Remouchamps and they had come, via motorcycle, to visit me. Had we proceeded to Malmedy, I would have missed them completely. As it was, we had but a very brief visit. I had to urge them to return to Chevron immediately in view of the front-line situation. With tears in our eyes we parted, as I promised in my broken French, that we Americans will never abandon them to the Germans; I was in no mood to run, but who would ask me? Later I would find out that the Germans actually did reach Chevron, but that they soon were driven out by our troops and everyone in that family had survived. And now began the scariest night of my life. Some of us were dispatched with our respective weapon, alone, onto some road that lead into our headquarters, to establish a road block while the others build a defensive perimeter. The rumors were rampant that German parachutists had landed and you could hear rifle firing all around us. But there I was, alone with my M-1 rifle, in pitch darkness, in the cold, without communication and without a flashlight, to guard the road I was on, with the only instructions not to let any Germans enter our perimeter. How was I to do that? Occasionally a truck or a jeep came by and I stood out in front of its headlights signaling the driver to stop. Had he been an enemy he could just as easily have run over me. Every driver I stopped carried frightening rumors of Germans in the area and deadly ambushes; it was hard to discern what was true and what was an exaggeration. But their stories were reinforced with the firing of weapons nearby. One of the drivers told me that I was crazy standing in the middle of the road – just get into the bushes and get out of the way. That seemed like a more intelligent approach and I kept weighing my options. I tried being on the side of the road but when I yelled out for the next vehicle to stop, he either did not hear me or ignored me and just went by. There should have been at least two of us out there! Finally, shortly after midnight, I was called back and we entered our vehicles for a black-out move towards Antwerp. This was a very complicated operation. You could hardly see the vehicle in front of you even when quite close – if you moved closer you threatened an accident, and too far back you could lose the vehicles in front and get lost. I sure was glad I was not driving. In the cold, without sleep and in retreat, none of us felt like a hero.

Germans in US Uniforms: The next morning we arrived in Namur, Belgium and occupied a building for Headquarters T-Force. Rumors continued to circulate, it was clear that the Germans had penetrated our lines but it was not clear how far they had been able to move. Were we surrounded, or not? At first we had no mission except to act as Infantry should that be needed. At night we had an air raid. We could hear one German plane and he was intent on

dropping some bombs. Our anti-aircraft kept firing but apparently he was too high to be hit. The only casualty we sustained was when one of our interpreters was in such a hurry to reach the basement that he fell down the stairs and broke his leg.

A couple of days later we were all briefed on a new mission. Apparently, the Germans had used a ruse to get behind our lines by dressing up their soldiers in American uniforms and placing four into a number of captured jeeps and raising havoc in our rear areas by blowing up installations, redirecting road signs, stringing wire across the road and reporting on our positions. It was to be our mission to go out and find them. Captain Remple designated his driver, Floh and me to go out on patrol, with either himself or Lt Hershey in charge on alternate days. We were to make a circle encompassing Dinant, Rochefort, Ciney and back to Namur, checking the major highway and the side roads to see and report what we could detect. We would set up roving roadblocks at critical locations and check each individual and vehicle which passed by. That was easier ordered than done. The soldiers who passed by did not trust us any better than we trusted them. Most would submit and show us their dog tags, but there were others who ignored us and just pushed by – they were obviously Americans and we were not going to shoot them. Then there was an instance when an obvious American soldier who looked like one of the Mauldin characters out of the ‘Willie and Joe’ cartoons, shoved a rifle into my stomach and yelled: “Get out of my f---n way!” All I could do was yell: “Lieutenant!” - but he was no help, so I solved the problem by getting out of his way. A bit further down the road we came across a couple of dead soldiers and the Lieutenant ordered us to search them. This was my first contact with dead bodies and I was not thrilled with my task. Of course we did not find anything except their paybooks - no great intelligence bonanza.

On one of the following days, in Dinant, we ran across an Infantry roadblock and they pointed to a jeep about a hundred yards to their front which they had wiped out with a bazooka. Here were four dead German soldiers in US uniforms. I never did find out how they knew for sure that they were facing the enemy when they took the shot, but they had done the right thing. We examined the bodies and found American dog tags on them but not much else except maps of the area. We collected the dog tags to turn them in, since they presumably indicated a captured or dead US soldier. The Captain reported all this upon return to our headquarters. Obviously, our mission was real.

Patrolling in Belgium: Driving along on our prescribed circuit was no picnic. The weather was absolutely terrible. Sometimes it was snowing and at other times it was freezing rain, which was worse. It was always overcast so that our planes could not fly and could not support our combat troops. Our jeep had to have its windshield down, so that we could use our weapons. Luckily, the jeep already had a vertical bar in front so that it would cut any wire which might have been strung across the road. With the windshield down, the cold air just cut into our faces even at the relative low speed of 25 MPH, but here I was somewhat lucky. As the lowest ranking one, I was designated to sit in the rear of the jeep. I would place myself directly behind the Captain while Floh ducked behind the driver. They took the brunt of the wind and by our silence, they never knew how much they saved us from the cold.

During one of the patrols, Floh and I were almost killed. We were driving along the icy highway and right next to the road was a steep precipice leading into a valley below. Suddenly, the jeep started to skid - very slowly - but heading towards the precipice. The driver jumped out of the jeep on one side and the Lieutenant on the other side. Floh and I were stuck in the back of the jeep with all that clothing we were wearing and holding our weapons. Somehow Floh was

able to lean forward between the seats and pump the brake pedal with his hand. Finally the jeep came to a stop, without much room before it would have plunged down. We were both shaken and got out of the jeep. Without saying another word, Floh punched the driver, who fell to the ground; the Lieutenant said nothing. After a while we all got back into the jeep and continued on our patrol. The incident was never again mentioned.

On one of our subsequent patrols with Captain Remple, as we were exploring some of the side roads, we could see that he was not quite sure where we were. He kept looking around, looked back at the map and looked around again. Well, it was not healthy to be lost, particularly with the combat situation so murky. As luck would have it, around the next curve we saw an American unit deployed on the hillside and we urged the Captain to stop and find out where we were. He was at first reluctant but then agreed and said to me: "Cohn, come with me." We trudged up the little hill and encountered an Infantry Lieutenant who had drug a table out of a nearby farm house and had placed his maps on top; here was an easy way to find out where we were. But apparently, the Captain did not want anyone to know that he was lost, so he approached the Lieutenant and introduced himself: "I am Captain Remple, Military Intelligence, could you brief me on the situation?" The Lieutenant was not much impressed and asked the Captain for his identification. Captain Remple showed him his dog tags. The Lieutenant replied that anyone can get dog tags, he wanted to see our Intelligence identifications. Captain Remple advised him that we do not carry those while on patrol, so that in case of capture, the enemy would not know that we were Intelligence Agents. The Lieutenant was not satisfied. He stated: "We got reports about four 'Krauts' in US uniforms penetrating our lines and you guys fit that description!" Captain Remple was appalled and assured the Lieutenant that we were US soldiers. "OK" said the Lieutenant: "Recite the 5<sup>th</sup> General Order". Of course I knew all of them, they were drilled into us during Basic Training, but he did not ask me – the Captain did not know. "Who won the World Series?" The Captain looked at me and I looked back, neither one of us knew that answer. The next question to the Captain: "Recite the Star Spangled Banner". The Captain started: "Oh say can you see by the dawn's early light --- eh ----- eh" he forgot the line. By now more and more people had gathered around us, so that Floh down below started to become concerned. He came running up the hill with his rifle at 'port arms', and with his heavy German accent shouted: "Vaat gos an hier?" using a perfect Kissinger-like accent. That seemed to be enough for everybody; an M-1 rifle was pointed against my stomach, another one against the Captain, a third against Floh, while a couple of Infantry soldiers ran down and grabbed the driver - our hands were raised high, we were disarmed and all four of us became 'POW's' of the Americans! The Lieutenant obviously asked for help and we were all separately interrogated. I told the truth about my background, but was not sure if that helped to explain us or to make us look more suspicious. It took seven hours, with us in the cold and wet on that little hill, for them to get confirmation from Le Vesinet that we were legitimate and with that the Lieutenant told us: "Get the hell out of here!" The Captain took us down the hill to the jeep and instructed us: "Don't say a word about this to anyone!" We all replied: "No, Sir!" But as we returned to T-Force Headquarters, as soon as we were spotted, a large group came running up to us yelling: "Hey, Vaat gos an hier!" They all had heard about our little adventure, when our legitimacy was checked; we were not going to live this down.

After the Bulge: It was Christmas day when the weather finally cleared and our planes could fly. We looked up into the sky and there were hundreds of them flying over us destined for the frontline in Belgium and into Germany. We knew that this would be the final turning point and

we cheered so loud we thought that they could hear us. And even if they couldn't they surely deserved the cheer. T-Force Headquarters now moved into a small castle in a small village called Vieu Valeffe (Old Village) about 10 miles outside of Liege. Here we had nothing to do while the officers were probably engaged in assembling the plans for our move into Germany. The first chance I got was to hop onto a truck taking us on a pass to Liege; and there to head for a bathhouse where I finally could take a hot shower. I must have stood under the water for 20 minutes because I heard the loud complaints of others who were waiting for their turn. And I even had clean underwear which one of the ladies in the village had finally washed for me.

While in the field, my mode of cleaning was extremely deficient. I would change my underwear every day, but the change was into the dirty underwear from the day before, which had hung out in the wind unless it rained. I had to wash myself out of my helmet, with a proper sequence of first brushing my teeth, then using soap and water to my face first and then the rest of what was exposed and washable; lastly I brushed out my hair. But whenever we were invited into houses, the first thing was to take advantage of washing options. During the time of the Bulge, there was not much opportunity to get clean and I took full advantage of all the trips to the washhouse in Liege.

My accommodations in the Vieu Valeffe Castle were much more primitive; we had to place our sleeping bags on the concrete floor. But soon I made friends with the owners of a small bar and restaurant – Alfred and Yvonne. They sort of adopted me as if I were their son. They provided me with a room and a bed, where I could sleep like a king. We were in Vieu Valeffe quite a long time – over a month and I got very attached to this kind couple. The winter was quite harsh and there was lots of snow, but I was sheltered while others had a much harder time. I knew I was well off. The spring finally arrived and we were ready to shove off into Germany; it was a sad good-bye.

## Chapter VIII: THE RHINELAND CAMPAIGNS

Aachen: The first city we entered was Aachen. The city had actually been captured by our troops before the Bulge, but was recaptured by the Germans; now we were back. There were no civilians in the town, every house was abandoned, even those not completely destroyed, where a residence was feasible. We saw some of our troops trampling around wearing top hats for fun and throughout the city there was looting of personal goods that had been left behind. Our Captain did not much approve of that and told us not to get involved. We had no mission in Aachen and prepared ourselves to move on to the first target town, Cologne (Koeln).

Cologne: As we were driving towards Cologne you could see the spire of the cathedral in the distance, the church was still standing. We waited on the outskirts as the Infantry was clearing out the last vestiges of German resistance on our side of the Rhine River. As we entered the city we saw that there was tremendous destruction, just about every house was damaged within the central city area. Most of the inhabitants had fled into the interior of Germany, but there were still a considerable number who had remained. They were now coming out of their cellars where they had sought shelter during the attack. We drove around the city to get an overview and find a place for our team to stay and operate. In the center of the city we came upon the Cathedral and looked at it closely. There had been some damage, but the church was still standing and no structural damage was apparent. What peaked our interest even more, was

the adjacent hotel. The hotel was in rubble but a lot of 2 ½ truck had parked in front of it. Upon closer look, we could see that a passage way had been cleared into its cellar and there, apparently, was a huge trove of stored wine – some in bottles, some in casks. The trucks were assembled to haul this away and it was not a government sponsored operation. T/Sgt Siegfried saw an opportunity. He took our 5 gallon water can out of the trailer spilled the water out on the street and entered the hotel cellar. A few minutes later he reappeared; he was carrying two bottles of wine and dragged the heavy water can in his other hand – it was now filled with wine. A few weeks later he was going to regret that decision. After a brief reconnaissance, we commandeered a small housing complex on the outskirts of the city which was in fairly good condition. The few German residents who were still there were unceremoniously kicked out; it was their problem to find shelter. Floh had somehow found an accordion and he was very conversant with that instrument. He knew all the German tunes and played them such as 'Unter der Laterne' (Lily Marlene). Our windows were open and we could see that some of the German residents in an adjacent block of houses also opened their windows to listen to the music. At one point he stopped and imitating Hitler's speech pattern almost perfectly, he started a Hitler speech in German, shouting: "My fellow citizens, don't be misled. There is no food shortage. You need butter? There is plenty of butter! We have so much butter in our warehouse, but there is a small problem, we can't get to the butter because there is so much coffee stored in front of it". Of course the Germans had neither coffee nor butter and we could hear the windows being slammed shut. I had to translate what had happened to the troops around us and then everyone could not stop laughing. All the tension had disappeared.

T-Force Mission in Cologne: Our first Building Target was a German Army Kaserne which was located on the bank of the Rhine and had allegedly served as quarters for the local Gestapo. There had not been any crossing of the Rhine by the US Army, which was a major military obstacle, and so the Germans were still on the other side of the river. We parked our jeep behind one of the bombed barracks and entered the first one. The barrack was not badly damaged, generally empty except for personal belongings which were strewn around; the Germans obviously had to flee in a hurry. But there was one life left in the barracks - a canary bird. He was chirping away. We checked the cage and the Germans had left him lots of seeds and water; he was the only thing that was in good shape; it gave us an odd feeling. We had captured a bird! Suddenly there was a loud explosion behind us. We immediately realized that we were under mortar fire from the other side of the river; the Germans had seen us. The shell had landed beyond our jeep. We ran back to the jeep as fast as we could and as we took off another shell landed just short of our vehicle. It was aimed mortar fire – one over, one short and fire for effect at the target in the middle. We left the target area in a hurry and raced into safety, as the third shell hit precisely where we had parked. This attack was personal; the Germans were directing their fire trying to kill me; that gave me a very sobering thought.

We had a number of Personality Targets in the city, but it soon became clear that all the important persons who were on our list had fled. But in one of the target addresses we found a low-level female Gestapo Agent. We were surprised to find her there. She had barricaded herself into the apartment and we shot the lock off the door and pushed our way in. Then she came along peacefully and we had to bring her to our pre-arranged detention area where she had to dig a 'ladies latrine', something we had not thought of. While searching her belongings we found medication which indicated that she had a sexual disease; we also found an address of an American Captain. The unit was nearby and it was no problem to identify the Captain. After a

short interrogation of him, we confirmed there was no Intelligence risk but he was at risk of a disease. We were not interested that he had violated the non-fraternization policy, so he was warned and sent to the medics.

Patrolling in Cologne: We were not well acquainted with the city and Floh and I were on patrol to help enforce the curfew. It was very foggy in the morning hours and suddenly the fog closed in on us as we were driving along. We really could not see where we were driving and a strange panicky feeling came over me, I knew that we needed to stop. I yelled at Floh and he too had a queer feeling. He stopped the jeep and we dismounted. Now we could see better and soon realized that we had strayed onto a bombed out bridge. Had we driven forward another 100 yards or so, we would have plunged into the Rhine River hundreds of feet below; it was a pretty close call. We turned around cautiously and then continued our patrol.

On one of our subsequent curfew patrols, Floh and I came upon a young girl about 17 or 18 years old running across the dark street in front of us. We stopped her and asked her why she was violating the curfew. She started to cry and told us that she was trying to find some food for herself, another girl and a woman who had sheltered her. She explained that they were all so hungry and had not eaten for a number of days. Upon further questioning, we found out that she and the other girl were Jewish and the woman who had hidden them from the Nazis was Dutch; they had subsisted on one ration card for a number of years. We took her to her house at Stadtwaldguertel 49 (I can still remember the address!) to confirm her story. Her name was Ellen and she had told us the truth. We could also tell that the Dutch lady was quite sick and she told us that she had cancer; the other young girl was weak and hungry. We had some rations in the jeep and gave those to them, so that they could eat something immediately; then we drove back to the billets and got more rations and had a small feast with them. They told us about their life in hiding and how they had supplemented their ration with food purchases on the black market. But for the past couple of weeks all their food sources had fled town and they had nothing left to eat until we arrived. When we returned to our Headquarters, we reported our findings to Lieutenant Levy, a Jewish Lieutenant who promised to help. A few days later, we returned for a visit and were greeted by an ‘Off Limits’ sign. I was infuriated and without entering the house, we returned to Headquarters, stormed into Lieutenant Levy’s office and challenged him, why would he permit the posting of such a sign? The woman was Dutch and I did not believe that the two Jewish girls, who technically were German, would fall into the non-fraternization category. Lieutenant Levy told us to calm down and that he did not know about any “Off Limits” sign; we all drove back to the Dutch lady’s house. There we entered the premises and were greeted enthusiastically by Ellen, by the Dutch lady and the other girl; the Dutch lady explained what had happened. Apparently, Lieutenant Levy had done such a good job, her story had become widely known, and soldiers had come with truck-loads of food – there was so much food and she had no place left to store it. She had turned to the commander of a nearby unit for help and he posted the sign to try and stop the GI generosity. It seemed to have worked. However, she now had one request. She had heard about a wonder drug named ‘penicillin’ which she thought might help cure her cancer. I promised her that I would try to get some. Not knowing that penicillin could do nothing against cancer, I wrote my mother and she somehow got a bottle of the drug and mailed it to me in a package. But when the package arrived (we had already left Cologne by then), with its required custom tag explaining its content, someone had ripped open the package and removed the medication. I later wondered what my mother must have thought about my request for penicillin. In any event, a few months later, after the war was over, I was able to

drive back to Cologne to check on Ellen, but unfortunately there was no one at home. I checked with some neighbors and heard that the Dutch lady had died and she had willed her house to the two young girls. I was unable to wait and thus I never saw Ellen again.

But back to our Cologne mission. After we had checked-out all of our pre-designated targets, we started a Registration Program wherein every remaining resident of the city had to register. A form had to be filled out and had to indicate if they had been a Nazi Party member and/or a government or Party functionary. We had to assure that these forms were properly completed and cautioned each person of the consequences of lying. Not one of the people who registered with me had admitted any Nazi Party connection. There was either mass lying or all those who had been Party members had fled the city. The registration had been scheduled to run alphabetically, to preclude a mass influx of people on the first day. When we reached 'L' we got orders to leave and military government personnel took over the remaining task of the registration.

Duesseldorf: We were off to the next Target city. In-route we had to spend the night in the field and the next morning we had no water to wash, only the wine in the water can. Wine is not a good liquid for washing; it was sticky and yucky. Even worse, when the jeep with the Lieutenant and T/Sgt Siegfried over-heated and had to stop, they just had wine for the radiator. A good lesson was learned. Water was more important than wine. We were not privy to the 'conversation' between the Lieutenant and T/Sgt Siegfried.

The bridge over the Rhine River at Remagen was unexpectedly captured, which exposed the industrial Saar Valley to be encircled. Duesseldorf was our next Target city and it was encircled by US troops. We crossed the Remagen Bridge under Engineer supervision and Military Police control without incident, although prior traffic had come under German artillery attack. (Many years later, I found out that a friend of mine, Colonel Jack Hyde, had been an MP Traffic Control Officer as a Lieutenant in charge of all bridge traffic and had been awarded the Silver Star for heroic action on that bridge). Floh and I were given a reconnaissance mission to ascertain if the Infantry had made enough progress to enable T-Force teams to enter. The confusion in communications was so great that only a personal check could ascertain what the facts were on the ground. We entered the outskirts of the city in our jeep. Up ahead was a residential area and we could see white sheets displayed on every house. As we negotiated a curve, we saw up ahead a roadblock across the street compiled with sand bags and furniture and with people scurrying around. We stopped to observe and realized that the people were not involved in building-up the roadblock; rather they were trying to dismantle it. Apparently, they must have feared that a roadblock might provoke firing by the oncoming American Forces. As we moved cautiously forward, we saw that there was an open path through the middle, however as the people noticed our jeep they fled back into their houses. By now we became leery, suspecting that no other American Forces had preceded us. But we continued on. As we traversed the gap in the road block, we must have run over debris and one of our rear tires became damaged. At the corner ahead we noticed the prominent sign of an ESSO Gas Station and we barely limped into its realm. No one was around. In the rear of the gas station was a residence and when we knocked, the apparent owner of the station answered. Hearing of our dilemma, he immediately volunteered to change the tire. During the 15 or so minutes it took to change the tire, not a single person appeared on the street. The gas station owner explained that we were the first American who had entered the city – at least from our direction. Floh and I had 'liberated' Duesseldorf! We gave the owner a pack of cigarettes and he was happy. With our

spare tire functioning properly we immediately returned to T-Force Headquarters and advised that we should wait one more day before entering the city – let the Infantry do its job!

The following day, T-Force proceeded into Duesseldorf and we started our job of locating targets. From the Cologne experience we had somewhat reorganized. As a linguist, I was teamed up with a better trained, but not bi-lingual Counter Intelligence (CIC) Agent. Our first priority target was the industrial giant ‘Stahlhof’. The CIC Agent explained that it was a conglomerate bigger than US Steel. In its Administration Building we encountered a minor functionary whom we instructed to assemble as many Directors as he could contact by early afternoon. When we reappeared later, about half a dozen corporate officials were waiting for us in a large conference room, still undamaged and conservatively decorated with a large conference table and huge leather chairs. Two seats at the head of the table were left empty – ours! As we sat down we were each offered a large cigar. The CIC Agent accepted one, but the smartest thing I ever did was to turn this offer down. The second-hand smoke alone almost wiped me out. Our proposal was thought to be simple; we wanted a complete inventory of all assets within 48 hours. The astonished group tried to explain that to make this inventory accurate it might easily take six month or more to assemble; but we were determined to get what we could in 48 hours. The information we received was integrated into our report, requesting follow-up by a specialized civil affairs team in later days. The environment I was in and the technical conversations made me feel very inadequate. I realized how young I must have seemed and I knew I did not yet have enough education to handle this type of situation. I felt lucky to be with a seasoned CIC Agent.

On about the fifth day in Duesseldorf, I was back with Floh and we were now in the process of checking 3<sup>rd</sup> (last) priority targets. One of these was the Telephone Exchange. After we entered the building, we were astonished to see a sizeable staff at work. The phone system appeared to be functioning. This seemed like a real miracle since the center of the city was pretty well leveled. We asked for the supervisor and an elderly lady appeared and assured us, that while there were many outages, the overall system had remained operational. Floh jokingly asked if he could perhaps talk to Berlin. “But of course” was the astounding reply. Floh suggested we do it and the supervisor established the connection. With a fluent Berliner accent, Floh started a conversation with the German operator in Berlin. After a while he identified himself as an American – suddenly there was complete silence; the connection had been broken off on the other end. When we tried to re-establish a connection, it was to no avail; the connection now remained permanently severed. After our report was submitted, Telephone Exchanges became first priority targets in all future cities.

Siegen: As we entered the industrial city of Siegen, also in the Saar Valley, a small commotion was apparent in the street ahead. Apparently, a somewhat inebriated former Polish forced laborer, who was carrying a rifle, had taken an elderly German prisoner whom he charged as being one of his former guards. The man’s daughter had run towards our jeep screaming and pleading for us to stop what she considered as an imminent execution of her father. The German man swore that he was a railroad employee and had never been inside of a forced labor camp – but he had no identification. The truth of the matter was hard to establish, but it was part of our mission to maintain law and order and this was not that. We decided to take the rifle away from the Polish worker; we took him with us, gave him some food and then released him in another part of the city. In a way, I always regretted that we interfered; I always imagined that the Pole

probably told the truth. But on the other hand, I did have a dictum: 'We can't ever get to be like them!' And that was what won out.

That night, I was on patrol with another soldier, a driver, and as we slowly advanced in our jeep in the utter darkness, with only our black-out lamps lit, we could hear, in the distance, the marching shoes of soldiers. With their iron cleats, there was no question but that they were German. We quickly dismounted from our jeep and waited. The outline of a marching group was approaching but it was too dark to recognize anything. In good military German I yelled: "Abteilung Halt!" (Unit Halt!). With a 'one-two' precision, the unit halted. I challenged one in the group to come forward. An elderly man in a German Non-Commissioned Officer uniform appeared. He explained that he was a member of the Volkssturm (People's Army), assigned to an anti-aircraft unit composed of 40 soldiers – old men (over 50) and young boys (under 17), that they had left their weapons behind in the forest, that they were hungry and tired and wanted to surrender. I took charge of the unit, told them to march behind our jeep towards the POW Camp I had seen at the edge of town. At the camp, I asked for the Officer in Charge. An NCO responded and rudely advised me that the camp was full and that he had instructions not to accept any more prisoners, that there was another camp about three miles away at the next town. We had to march on. At the next camp, I changed my approach. It was daylight by now and I raced up ahead and advised the gate guard that this group of oncoming prisoners was being moved from the POW Camp in Siegen and that I had instructions to return immediately after dropping off these prisoners; with that we drove off as the unit approached the gate. There was no one to compliment me of my 'heroic' deed of capturing 40 German soldiers - I just felt lucky to be rid of them; and I had wasted more than four hours and lost some much needed sleep.

Frankfurt: Perhaps the most important target city for T-Force was Frankfurt. The city was destined to be the Supreme Headquarters of American Forces Europe (SHAFE), where General Eisenhower was to be stationed as its commander. T-Force entered Frankfurt and moved into the Excelsior Hotel which was located opposite the railway station. The station was still burning and we had to make arrangements for German prisoners to put out the fire. In the meantime we had captured quite a number of Personality Targets. Most of the Germans realized by now that the war was nearing its end and that it probably was better to surrender to the Americans than to flee and be caught by the Russians. Among the prisoners I interrogated was the German Crown Prince, the son of the Kaiser named Auwie, a nickname short for August Wilhelm. He had been an SS General and was on our automatic arrest list. Someone took pictures as I instructed him to empty his suitcase and stand at attention in front of his belongings, awaiting interrogation. Our interrogation was always just preliminary and we tried to formulate a report which recommended further questioning towards securing enough data helpful for future war crime prosecution.

As interrogations progressed, we were suddenly ordered to stop everything and run over to the railroad station where we had parked our vehicles; someone had discovered an extremely large unexploded bomb in the station and it was feared that it might explode, as efforts were made to disarm it. I was ordered into a jeep and told to: Move it!" I tried to tell the Sergeant that I did not know how to drive. He turned to me and with well-chosen GI language he said something like: (Translated from unacceptable to acceptable language) "I really do not care much about what you have to say, just get into that very nice jeep and move it to that other nice place over there". With that, I did the best I could. It was like I was breaking in a new horse, but

I did manage to get it to ‘that other nice place over there’. The next day I asked Floh to, for God’s sake, teach me how to drive!

As a first priority target, we proceeded to the IG Farben building which was destined to become SHAEFE Headquarters. When we arrived we could see that the building was a mess. It was understood that the Army Air Corps had been instructed to avoid damaging the building. But here, on the ground, some local commander had authorized refugees to occupy the building. During the interim time, between its capture by combat troops and our arrival, the refugees had vented their anger at the Germans by throwing all the furniture through the initially well preserved windows, wrecking anything movable in sight. We had an Infantry unit round up all the refugees and clear the building; then we proceeded to the vault in the basement. Engineer demolition personnel, who had been designated to support us, breached the locking mechanisms and ‘confiscated’ all the industrial diamonds, while we impounded all the documentation and collected all the paper money. Many thousands of Marks were in the vault and in a mistaken belief that this currency, bearing the swastika symbol, was now worthless, we distributed the currency as souvenirs to our headquarters personnel. Later we were advised that the Mark had been designated to retain a value of about 10 cents American money. I personally must have given away over a thousand dollars’ worth of Marks to unit members who did not have the opportunity to leave T-Force Headquarters. Now that was true generosity!

A Jewish Family: After I returned to T-Force Headquarters, Floh greeted me and explained that he had found a Jewish family in a house in Frankfurt by the name of Siegel. We proceeded to their residence. The father was Jewish and the mother Christian. They had four children, two sons who were lost in concentration camps and two daughters in their twenties who were now with their parents. One of the daughters had survived by being used by Nazi officers as a sex slave. In the course of one of those relationships, she had conceived a daughter, now three years old, who was also present in the household. That the older Siegel had survived could be considered a miracle; somehow his Christian wife had been able to protect him. Some years later, he became the head of the Frankfurt Jewish Congregation. We immediately brought them food and I surrendered my cigarette ration to them - cigarettes were worth a lot of money on the black market. On my cigarette ration alone, the family had ample resources to survive for months with food. I stayed in contact with this family for a number of years.

Wiesbaden: After remaining in Frankfurt for a couple of weeks, my team was requested to make a side trip to Wiesbaden. In Wiesbaden the Infantry had liberated a Russian Labor Camp which was located right across the street from the Henkel Champagne Factory. The problem we faced in the camp was that some of the Russian laborers had volunteered to help the Nazis and some were forced laborers, taken prisoner and shipped into the camp. To try to differentiate was an almost impossible task. You never knew who was lying and who was telling the truth. Language was another difficulty. We did not speak Russian and while most of them spoke some broken German they were not fluent enough for us to detect lies. After the war had finished, I was again asked to help out. By then a Soviet Mission had opened up in Wiesbaden with an order to return as many of its citizens as they could. We were absolutely insistent that we would not forcibly return anyone who did not want to return; on the other hand we would facilitate their departure if they wanted to return home. A complication soon arose when one of the Russian girls, who had opted to return to Russia, had somehow come back to Wiesbaden. She told the camp residents that upon reaching Russia all former laborers were immediately

imprisoned and no attempt was made to distinguish between those who volunteered from those who were forced laborers; they had shaved the hair off all the girls and she pointed to her meager hair. After that, no one opted to return to Russia and the Soviet Mission was avoided by all the camp residents. I had my first real love affair with one of the camp residents, an 18 year old girl named Mila; she was absolutely beautiful and came from the Ukraine. I saw her when I first entered the Labor Camp but she seemed very shy. She stayed mainly by herself, her German was quite fluent and I always managed to talk to her. Slowly she seemed to welcome my attempt to get to know her. But she indicated that there was some secret which made her hesitate to get me to know her better. After the war was over and I returned to work in the camp there was a complete change and she became much friendlier, but more of that later.

Kassel: The end of the war was approaching fast. In route from Frankfurt to Kassel, we were in a convoy on the Autobahn. All the bridges had been blown by the Germans and the detours were hard to negotiate. And all along the way, our convoy was approached by groups of German soldiers with their hands raised who wanted to surrender to us. They were obviously hungry and had heard that the Americans treated their prisoners reasonable well. But we waived them all off since we were on a different mission. It was of course obvious to us that the war was technically over, at least for us Americans in the West. We were well exposed to any German soldier, who wanted to kill us, but no shots were fired, they had enough of the war. We had not even pursued one Target in Kassel, before my team received a change in mission, to proceed immediately to Magdeburg, since the Soviet Army had reached the Elbe River and we needed an American presence there. It was the shortest time we ever spent in one city and off we went again on the Autobahn seeing German soldiers all along the way just waiting for someone to tell them what to do.

Magdeburg: Magdeburg is a city on the Elbe River. The Elbe River had been designated by General Eisenhower as the dividing line between US and Soviet Forces, as those armies moved towards each other from the west and the east respectively. It was a wise decision to preclude any unintended consequences should two armies intertwine. The first meeting at the Elbe had been at Torgau to the East of us, on April 25, but we did not know that. All we knew was that the Russians had now reached the Elbe at Magdeburg and it was incumbent on the US to make our presence known on our side of the river. Captain Remple had been given the mission to make contact with the Soviet Forces and advise them to stay on their side of the river, until the Western Allies withdrew to pre-arranged occupation zones; these zones would place all of Magdeburg as well as areas to our rear into the Soviet Zone. In support of his mission, Captain Remple had received a ‘Top Secret’ map which depicted the occupation zone boundaries. Secrecy was of the utmost importance since none of the Allies wanted the defeated Germans to be able to choose which occupier they preferred, since that might bring innumerable additional refugees into the road net. To do his job, Captain Remple wanted a Russian linguist; unfortunately none could be found in our unit. He then turned to me and said: “Cohn, you are my interpreter, come with me.” Knowing that I could not be of help with the Russian language, I vehemently protested, I kept saying that I did not speak any Russian and I did not want to go on a mission in which I would surely fail. But my protestations were in vain; Captain Remple simply told me: “Cohn, come and carry the map” and off we went. At the river’s edge he commanded a German boatman to take us across; in mid river he stood up to make sure the Russians would see that an American soldier was approaching. What then happened was

completely unexpected. We were received as we were the conquering heroes. We were embraced by the Russian soldiers, carried around on their shoulders and immediately plied with vodka. At age 19 I had never had a drink of vodka in my life, but I quickly realized that one drink of the stuff was plenty. I luckily had brought along some cigarettes and they were very welcomed. Beyond the word ‘Tovarish’ I had no further Russian expressions and, as suspected, I was completely useless beyond carrying the map. And that too was short lived. The Captain was taken to their rear with the map, while I stayed at the river’s edge with the Russian troops; presumably they managed to get an appropriate interpreter for him. While waiting for the Captain’s return, I was engaged in some sort of ‘conversation’ with the Russian troops. One NCO was particularly friendly and with hand gestures he made clear that he was from Moscow and he wanted me to visit there. I retuned that offer by explaining that I came from New York and that he should visit the US. What I did not realize at that time, that I was among only a very few American soldiers who actually had made contact with the Russians, since General Eisenhower’s orders had precluded wide-spread contacts, everyone had to stay on their side of the river. And, little did I know then, that 60 years later, because of this contact, I would be invited to travel to Moscow, to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soviet and US Forces meeting at the Elbe. It also took me a long time to understand why we had been so enthusiastically received. We knew for the past few days that the war was over for us; however, the Russians had to fight all the way to the Elbe, so when they finally saw us, they realized that there were no more German troops in front of them, now the war was over for them and they had survived and that was worth a celebration. Of course, the war was actually not yet over. There was still heavy fighting in Berlin and that lasted into the first week of May. But for us, here on the Elbe, there was no more war!

The End of the War: T-Force Headquarters had moved into the villa of the German Economic Minister Frank. It was a well-furnished home and we were comfortable awaiting the end of the war. When the official word came that Germany had surrendered, we hardly took notice; it was anti-climactic for us. We stayed in Magdeburg for at least a week and came up with a number of Personality targets; they seemed happy that they were caught by us rather than by the Russian. And somehow, many Germans had heard rumors about an oncoming transition of Magdeburg to the Russians, making them plan to escape westward to stay with the Americans. They really feared the Russians, probably because they knew what the German Army had done in Russia. We consistently denied the rumors. But even we became skeptical about what was to happen when we were ordered to withdraw to Wiesbaden and ended up turning our installations over to the British. It was not until July ‘45 that the British also withdrew and then turned Magdeburg as well as all areas due west, down to Helmstead, over to the Soviets.

## Chapter IX: THE OCCUPATION

A Transition: Upon arriving at Wiesbaden, where 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group Headquarters was located, we found out that T-Force was being deactivated and our team members were scattered with different orders. I received orders to proceed to the newly formed Military Intelligence Center at Obersursel, near Frankfurt. I was named a Document Specialist, a title I did not exactly care for. One factor however was in my favor. I was to occupy a position which called for the rank of Staff Sergeant. While the war was ongoing, we did not think about promotions and I

remained in the low rank of Pfc – but I did not mind, since I never showed my rank with my ‘US’ insignias and money was of little concern since cigarettes were of better value. Now, in the Army of Occupation, we had to wear our rank. I immediately was promoted to T-3 which was equivalent to a Corporal, but not in the category of a non-commissioned officer. I was still in jeopardy to pull KP and sure enough, I came up on the roster. Luckily it was not as horrendous as my first experience with KP; we had German workers to do the hardest scrubbing jobs. In any event, I hated that job and I had to see how I could avoid it.

Shipping Documents to the States: The opportunity came quickly. I was interviewed by the Chief of Documents, a Lieutenant Colonel Gronich and his deputy a Major Spiegel at SHAEF Headquarters, within that familiar IG Farben building in Frankfurt, to see if I could take over the document crating operation in an I G Farben owned warehouse in Fechenheim, on the other side of Frankfurt. The job was to crate sensitive documents, which might be useful in war crime prosecutions, for shipment back to the States where they would be further examined. To do the job, I would be allocated a squad of German prisoners and I would oversee their involvement to assure proper crating and document security. I must have provided the right answers, because I got the job and along with it, an immediate promotion to Corporal – no more KP! I was issued a jeep and I met my squad of 12 POW’s, all former German Army enlisted men, with a Sergeant Kaufmann in charge. The documents we crated were files from German governmental agencies, the Nazi Party and the Gestapo, but I had little opportunity to browse, and I was required to see that the POW’s would not become involved in reading them. Years later, I heard that we had made life very difficult for the people who received the crates. Had I marked the content of each crate on the outside, the work to arrange the material for examination would have been much simpler. But nobody had given me any instructions and no one was really interested in what I was doing. I was on my own along with my POW’s and we did what we were told – we very neatly crated each box and marked the destination for shipment. We worked for a number of month and each month I received a promotion, until I finally was able to sew on my Staff Sergeant stripes – I was proud of that promotion, I was now a ‘first-three grader’, a senior ranking NCO (the top 3 grades were: Master Sergeant, Technical Sergeant and lastly Staff Sergeant – the lowest of the three). In January 1946, I was approached by Sergeant Kaufmann, about arranging their discharge from POW status and internment; their proposal was that the entire squad would continue to work in a civilian capacity for at least the next six month. We were by now a well-functioning team and I believed their word. I arranged the discharge which was accomplished over a weekend, with a loss of only one day of work. Every one of the former POW’s returned to me for work as a civilian worker, and I arranged for their respective civilian pay.

An additional benefit that came with my job was my jeep. I had transportation. This provided me with the opportunity to drive to Wiesbaden, whenever I had time, to visit with Mila. She had left the Labor Camp and lived in the upstairs room of a villa owned by a German widow. It was right across the street from the Henkel Champagne factory. Mila’s secret was that she had been raped when the war ended and she was pregnant. She had heard that an abortion could be arranged through the owner of a Barber Shop in Frankfurt, right near the railroad station where I had ‘learned’ to drive a jeep. I took her there and she indicated that she would return to Wiesbaden on her own. I had given her my cigarette ration and I knew that this would pay for the procedure. It was all very disconcerting to me since I had no experience in this realm. But she was back in Wiesbaden on the following day and there had been no bad after effects. She was

much happier now, since the pregnancy had caused her great concerns. We celebrated by going to a recently opened night club in Wiesbaden. Whenever I could, I drove to Wiesbaden to be with her and I even managed to bring her to Oberursel so that she could see where I was stationed and we could have fun in the NCO Club there. As my departure from Germany approached, I felt very guilty about leaving. I was in no position to marry her. I was still too young and knew that I needed education to support us both. This love affair was not going to have a happy ending. It was a very tearful good-bye when I left for the States.

Guarding War Criminals: As an additional duty, and since I was now a Non-Commissioned Officer, I had to pull duty as Sergeant of the Guard. Oberursel was also a detention center for war criminals. However we did not know who was incarcerated in our facility. As Sergeant of the Guard, I was only responsible for the security of the outer perimeter of the prisoner compound. None of my guards, or I, was authorized to enter the inner prison. A separate guard detachment was in charge of the cell block, but those guards did not fall under my jurisdiction. Aside from those guards, only specifically authorized interrogators and lawyers were authorized to enter. This arrangement promoted excellent security. There was always curiosity as to who we were guarding. Everyone thought that Goering was in our prison, but everyone was wrong. I later found out the group which was tried in the first Nuernberg trial was imprisoned in the Berlin area; we, on the other hand had been guarding the defendants of the second Nuernberg trial – the second level of war criminals. But whoever we guarded were real Nazi criminals, the worst kind, those who had killed Jews, so I really did not mind this duty; it was part of my pay-back!

A Top Secret Document – or so I thought: Soon after my accession as the shipper of documents, I was called back into the office of LTC Gronich in Frankfurt for an important mission. He gave me a large sealed envelope and instructed me to proceed to Hoechst, to another IG Farben installation near Frankfurt, where there was a refugee camp and a photographic facility. I was to arrange for 50 copies to be made of the content of the envelope and I was urged to exercise the utmost care that no German worker would read its content. I proceeded as instructed and conferred with the German photographers at the plant, inquiring if anyone could work blindfolded. An elderly man volunteered and we proceeded as envisioned. As he worked, I had to examine each page to be sure that it was clean, centered and readable and I had to collate them. To my astonishment, the document in my possession was ‘Hitler’s Last Will and Testament’, his final slur against the Jews and charges that the German people had let him down. I had prepared 50 envelopes, into which I inserted one copy each of the entire document. I then returned to Frankfurt and handed the packet over to LTC Gronich personally, as he had requested. My mission was accomplished. But to my further surprise, the next morning the Stars and Stripes newspaper carried a detailed account of the latest discovery: ‘Hitler’s Last Will and Testament!’ All this secrecy had been a sham, I felt quite foolish. Apparently, the 50 copies turned out to be souvenirs for VIP’s, a present from the Chief of Documents. Had I known that, I would have made 51 copies.

A Trip to Berlin: In October 1945 American troops entered Berlin, as arranged with the Russians, and I asked LTC Gronich to allow me to go to Berlin, if and when the opportunity ever presented itself. I wanted to see if I could locate any information about the fate of my mother’s sister, my aunt Else (the widow of Max Berdass who had been killed by the Nazis in 1931), and

who was known to have last been residing in Berlin after the war broke out. In December 1945, I was called to Frankfurt and was given two crates of Top Secret documents destined for the Berlin Document Center. By then I had been promoted to Sergeant, but I was told that this mission was strictly a favor for me and that another soldier, a Corporal Feher was in charge of the trip and that he had 10 crates of documents under his supervision. Obviously I had no objection, since I was very anxious to get to Berlin and to be able to write to my mother about anything I could find out there. The next morning, Corporal Feher brought a jeep and trailer to Oberursel; his crates were already loaded and I placed my crates on top of his. We traveled along the Autobahn, but it was slow progress in view of the many detours, since most of the bridges which had been blown were not yet repaired. About half way to Berlin in Goettingen, we decided to spend the night. Cpl Feher suggested we change off guarding the documents and sleeping at a Gasthaus; I agreed since we had to assure the security of our Top Secret documents. He laughed and asked: "What Top Secret documents?" I said that I had two crates of those – but he countered: "Maybe you have, but not me!" Apparently in his ten crates, marked identical to mine, he had cigarettes, coffee and other items earmarked for the Berlin black market. To say the least, I became very uncomfortable. Who would believe that I had no knowledge of what was in those crates – he the Corporal and me the Sergeant? The next morning we crossed through the Soviet Occupation Zone at Helmstead and processed into the American Sector at the MP checkpoint as we entered Berlin, all without incident. (I found out later, that on a prior day all traffic had been thoroughly examined at that MP checkpoint.) I asked Feher to drop me off at the Berlin Document Center with my crates and that I did not want to see him again until after he got rid of his 'documents'. I spent the rest of the day looking for information about former Jewish residents of Berlin. At a German Red Cross Office, I found a list of deported personnel. My aunt's name was reflected on the list of deportees to Theresienstadt in 1943; she was not reflected on another list of Theresienstadt survivors. There was no other list indicating further disposition, but Red Cross representatives explained that most prisoners in Theresienstadt were ultimately deported to the Auschwitz extermination camp. I had to presume that this was what had happened to my aunt. Later that evening, Feher met me in the enlisted billets. He had a little sack which he opened and spread its content on the blanket of his bed – the sack was filled with diamonds. He explained his 50:50 split with the officers at SHAPE. He asked me if I had any cigarettes with me. I had brought two cartons along, in case I needed them to secure information about my aunt. He took them from me and within ten minutes he brought me \$300 in script money. In Berlin a carton of cigarettes was worth \$150 in script on the black market. I guessed that this was his way to make sure I would not say anything. Since soldiers were allowed to send script money home, up to the amount of their pay and since I never has sent any money home before, I was able to send my mother the \$300, along with the sad news about her sister.

War Buddies: We were a close-knit group in the Obersurzel Intelligence Center, particularly the Intelligence personnel who had served in T-Force. Many of the linguists were former German Jews like me, but there were also some whose ancestry was German and they knew their German language from speaking German in their homes in the States. I was friendly with one named Mueller, a real German name. One evening, while we were drinking beer in the NCO Club, he confided that he really hated Jews – only I was different! He had caught me by surprise, I had no good response. Regardless of Hitler's demise, anti-Semitism did not die, not even among American soldiers. He urged me to come to Queens, to visit him after we returned home. Of course I never did. The one I had liked best was Floh, and I did visit him after I

returned to the States, in Utica, New York where he had a milk farm; I even spent my honeymoon there in 1948. I also visited Ruby Kreiner, another American Jewish soldier, quite a bit older than me, who owned a clothing shop in lower Manhattan. But over the years I lost contact with both of them, as I moved out of New York after my College graduation.

Going Home: As soon as the war was over, all the soldiers waited for the time when they could return home to the States. A point system had been devised which leaned on the date a soldier had left for overseas – that is when the points started to accumulate. My count had started in September '44 and I was due to return in May 46. My boss at SHAEF Headquarters wanted to reward me and he arranged for me to hand-carry some classified documents to be handed over to the Port Authority upon my arrival in Brooklyn, New York. For that purpose I was scheduled to ship out from Le Havre on a Liberty Ship run by the US Navy. What a difference from my first Army sea voyage! Now I was a non-commissioned officer and I ate in an NCO Mess. The Navy knew how to live while at sea and I was treated like a VIP. I had forgotten how good cooking tasted and it was a fine transition to my mother's home cooking upon my return. Otherwise the one week trip was uneventful. The documents were in a safe during my voyage and upon arrival in Brooklyn I had no problem turning them over to the proper authorities. However, I did have a problem getting a cab to drive me to Manhattan. It was the noon hour and the cabbies made much more money on short trips. No one wanted to take me to Manhattan. Finally after 2 PM, a cabby took pity on me and drove me to West 108<sup>th</sup> Street. There a strange feeling came over me. You would think that I would try to rush into my home and to my parents – but no, I was not ready. I dumped my duffel bag near the entrance and started to walk the familiar streets. I passed the Candy Store at the corner, the Bar and Pizzeria on Amsterdam Avenue, the Auto Parts Store and the familiar residences of my past friends; I did not want to meet anyone and I thought myself lucky when I didn't. Everyone was at work anyway and it was late in the afternoon. The walk seemed to calm me down and I slowly returned to my address and knocked at the door. Of course my mother was thrilled to see me since she had been waiting anxiously for a number of days, not knowing when I would show up. When my father returned home from work, he too was elated, although he looked very tired ---- after 2 ½ years I was finally home!

One Last Army Task: I was still on active duty and had to be discharged. I don't remember exactly where that was done, but it was somewhere in Manhattan, it had been made convenient. I went there the next day and as I processed out, there was one more table: 'Army Reserve'. I was asked if I wanted to join. I was proud to have been promoted to Staff Sergeant and I could keep my rank in the Reserve. I signed up. I did not know then that this was a very fortunate decision. I now went home and sewed a 'Ruptured Duck' on my uniform which signified that I was discharged. But I wore that uniform only for a couple of days, until I could buy some more modern civilian clothes. I was planning to return to College in the fall but for now I was taking a vacation.

Then A Tragedy: I had been back less than 2 weeks when my father suffered a heart attack while at work as a Stock Clerk at the Eagle Pen and Pencil Company. He was rushed to the Bellevue Hospital and we went immediately there to see him. The doctors did not permit it, but asked if I could give blood. I did and hoped that it would help; but nothing helped, he died the next day on May 14, 1946 and we had no chance to say good-bye. My mother and I were now alone and I at least had one good thought that I had returned from overseas before he died.

We buried him the next day, in a plot which was owned by our 110<sup>th</sup> Street Temple, in the Beth Israel Cemetery, in Woodbridge, New Jersey.

### A HOLOCAUST RECAPITULATION

It was not until I returned to the States that I became aware of the total impact of the Holocaust. I had no idea that 6 million Jews had perished. The German Jews had options to escape from the time Hitler came into power in 1933 until the war broke out in 1939. So did the Austrian Jews, they had about one year. Two thirds of German and Austrian Jews did manage to escape, in spite of all the obstacles other nations posed by limiting immigration. However, the Jews in the German occupied territories had no chance at all; once the German troops arrived they were caught and were shot or sent to concentration camps and gassed. Just about all of the Jews in Poland and in the Baltic States were eliminated in that way, as were the Russian Jews in the area of Russia which was conquered by the Germans. There was no chance for them to escape. Near the end of the war there were some feeble efforts to save the Hungarian Jews. The Swedish Diplomat Wallenberg saved thousands by issuing Swedish safe passage papers, but he could not save them all; a large part of them also perished. The Washington DC Holocaust Museum tells the entire story.

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### Chapter X: AN ARMY CAREER

Army Reserve: Not long after my active duty discharge, I turned my attention back to the Army Reserve. I was placed in the Intelligence Branch in view of my war time service and as an active Reserve member I joined the 337<sup>th</sup> MI Detachment, headed by a Municipal Court Judge, Lieutenant Colonel Ringel, who had many good political connections to provide us with periodic lectures and intelligence briefings from prominent political leaders such as Nelson Rockefeller and various Senators and Representatives. While I was in the ROTC at CCNY and still one year to graduation, as a 'First Three Grader' NCO, I was offered a Reserve Commission and sworn in as a Second Lieutenant, Intelligence. Upon my College graduation, I was designated an ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate and offered a Regular Army Commission which I accepted and returned to active duty, now as an officer. However at that time the Intelligence Branch was not yet an active duty branch and I opted to the closest related branch, Military Police with a two year commitment to a combat branch – Infantry. And with my reserve duty counting for longevity, whenever I received an active duty promotion, I immediately drew the highest pay within that rank.

The 52-20 Club: In retrospect, I guess I was somewhat depressed during the following few months after my return from overseas. The death of my father, along with the significant reduction in the pace of my existence –from high profile jobs to plain leisure, I missed Mila and there was the change in the people in the neighborhood – they all were a couple of years older and had different connections. For example the girl I had named on my jeep had progressed to a steady boyfriend, something I had suspected all along and her mother, who I really liked, had died, yet no one had told me. And there was Lee Neuer who had cried when I left for the war;

she was now engaged to a nice fellow who was going to be a Doctor and soon she would be Lee Fuerth. There were other girls, who had written to me during the war, but when the war ended the correspondence petered out; they too had other interests. The boys who I used to meet around the block all had jobs now, Tommy Maloy was a policeman, Pete Riley a fireman, Milton Contas was away in College, and so it went. I felt that I had no real friends left and I certainly had not developed any plans for my future. The only positive factor was that I did not have to worry immediately about money. I had not saved very much, but the government had a provision to allow each honorably discharged veteran a weekly gift of \$20 which could be allotted up to 52 weeks; it would stop when you found a job or started school, or in any event after one year. I had done neither a job search nor submitted my application for College, so I reported weekly for my stipend during May, June, July and August. I also requested the Veterans Administration to process my disability claim for the injuries I sustained in that training accident with white phosphorous. While it was initially denied, on appeal, I received a 10% disability - not much money, but every little bit helped. In May I had received a telegram from my former administrative boss, M/Sgt Wagner. He wanted me to come back to Oberursel, in a civilian capacity and he explained to me how I can get such a Federal job. I started to investigate it since work there, beat my idleness here. But to my astonishment, every job that I knew I could do or had done in the past now required a college degree. So, in August when I turned 21, I shocked myself into realizing that I had to take some action to get me back on track; what I was doing had to stop. I had to go back to college. Of course I was facing probation due to that disastrous summer term, which I never should have attempted. Now I knew that I would not want to become an Engineer; I absolutely did not like to do the work I saw the Engineers perform during the war. I thought that majoring in Psychology and Education might work for me. It might even help me figure out what was wrong with me.

Back to CCNY: In September 1946, I was back at CCNY. This time I was in the uptown Campus, at 138<sup>th</sup> Street and Convent Avenue. I could tell that I had matured since I looked at my studies in a much more critical way. I started out on probation, due to my disastrous summer term in 1943. I had to find courses which could be useful in any future employment and which I would find interesting. CCNY was a subway college. Most students took the subway to get to school and when school was over they took the subway home; so did I. The one aggravating factor that we did have to contend with as 'freshmen' was that we had the lowest priority to sign up for classes. The classes I really wanted were invariably already closed, by the time my turn came to select them. There were many 'time' compromises which had to be made. The result was very long days at school with lots of empty hours. Of course you could study during those hours but unfortunately they usually were just wasted. When the term ended, I was off my probation. It seemed that the maturing factor had worked.

All of us veterans informally, banded together and showed a complete disregard to the efforts of upper classmen to inflict hazing on us 'freshmen' – we just were too old for that and probably were older than some of those non-veteran juniors or even seniors. We just ignored them and that took care of that. There was not much of a college social life except what was experienced in the school cafeteria during the lunch hour. Apart from school, as I started college, it became clear to me that I had to acquire a new group of friends. The only real hold-over was my friend Paul who also had returned to CCNY and who remained in Engineering. He had involved himself in a new, sort of professional fraternity called 'Mu Sigma Pi' with other

engineering students and he asked me to join as a ‘former engineering student’. I did as he asked, and during my entire college career most of my male friends were studying to be Engineers.

Paula: One day at school I ran into my former girlfriend, Paula Brimberg. This was the girl who had played ping pong with me and who had gone to the movie with me a number of times. She was even more beautiful than before. During the war I had lost contact with her and as I saw her now, I could not figure out why we had not corresponded. This girl I had to date again and I did. She was an Education major and was a sort of a trail blazer, since girls at CCNY were a novel arrangement, and their admittance was a result of the war. We saw that we had a lot in common and we selected foreign films at the Thalia Movie Theater on 98<sup>th</sup> Street as one of our prime entertainment ventures. I was short on cash, since the 52-20 Club had terminated when I started school and my disability payment was much too meager. I kept dipping into my modest savings, and by being careful with money, it all worked out. I had enrolled in ROTC at CCNY and there were always functions like dances where I could invite Paula. I made friends with George Strauss who, like my friend Paul, was a refugee from Austria and who had ROTC classes with me. Finally I had found someone who was not going to be an Engineer, he was majoring in Economics.

Initially, Paula and I were still dating others, as was the mode at the time, but slowly, with persistence, I started to squeeze out the other dates. I am now accused of ‘stalking’ her, which I probably did. When it rained, I was there with an umbrella, as she came up from the subway. When she returned from a date, I was hanging around near her house and signaled to see her, after she said good night to that other guy. It became clear to me fairly soon that here was the girl I wanted to marry. Paula had lost her brother, a Marine, as the war ended. Her father had died when she was only one year old and her mother had to support the family. She still had two sisters who had gone to work after High School while she was the first to go to College; but the economics were such that she had to go to work and continue College at night. She soon realized that her appearance was such that she could model clothes. There was no problem for her to get a job in the Garment Center of New York, but often the jobs were seasonal and she had to switch around. Lerner Shops was one of her best employers. As our dating progressed to the ‘steady’ stage, I gave her an engagement ring; the diamond had come from my father and I had it placed into a proper setting. She was very hesitant in accepting it because her family was insistent that she was too young to think about marriage; she was still not quite 20. She placed the ring on a chain around her neck and it either showed when we were together or it was hidden when she was home. Her mother had liked me when we were just dating, but now that dates had become more serious, her mother sent her, along with the middle sister, for a couple of weeks to Florida where, it was hoped, she would see the error of her ways. I was miserable during the time of her absence, which only made me realize that I had to take some aggressive action. Upon her return, I proposed that we should get married. It had been an off and on engagement but on November 3, 1948, Paula and I, along with my friend Paul from Junior High School days, my friend George from ROTC and his girlfriend Jutta got on a subway together with the mission to elope and to find Judge Ringel and ask him to marry us. To my consternation, I found out that a Municipal Judge did not have the jurisdiction to marry. Paula was ready to return home, but this was an elopement and I was determined to get married. We got a phone book and found a Rabbi in Queens who was willing to do this task. Back to the subway and off to Queens. The newspapers had a screaming headline that Truman had won the election, beating Dewey. That all was very

interesting since I had voted for Dewey, but it was irrelevant to what was currently on my mind. The Rabbi was solicitous and performed the ceremony – Paula and I were married.

There was only one problem, we had no place to stay, no residence of our own and there was an acute housing shortage in New York City. There was nothing else to do but to short-circuit the elopement and to go home separately to our respective apartments. Neither one of us told our parents or anyone else; the secret remained among us 5 conspirators. It took us about 10 days to find a studio apartment on 102<sup>nd</sup> Street near Broadway and that was when we finally announced our marriage to both of our mothers. Paula's mother was quite angry and mine felt disappointed. But the hard feelings did not last very long – the next day all was forgiven. Now there was bliss. I was indeed a fortunate married man. While I completed my last year in College, Paula was working as a model, supporting me and going to night school towards her degree. But after my graduation she had to cut her schooling short since I was transferred to Fort Riley, Kansas, back to school, the Army's Ground General School, as my first active duty assignment. But all was not lost for Paula's schooling. When I went to Korea in 1957 for an unaccompanied tour of duty, Paula went back to New York to finish College at CCNY. And then in 1960 we both went to Michigan State for our respective Master's Degree, she in Education and Counseling and me in Police Administration. Now we have been married for over 67 years; after elopement and after all these years of marriage, I think that it may yet all work out!

P.S. I should have written to her during the war – shame on me!

My Mother: When I moved out of my mother's home, she felt quite lonely and had been dating a German refugee her age, also from Breslau. Once I was married, she married him. His name was Charles Tuck and she was now known as Ruth Tuck. Her new husband had been a druggist in Germany, but here in the States he could not transfer his credentials and he became a piano tuner. He had escaped Germany to Haiti and there, unbeknown to me, had two daughters, Gerda and Charlotte, who I did not meet until my mother had died in 1971. He also had a great talent of playing the piano and always was the life of any party with this skill. My mother really appreciated his playing and the parties which she could now attend. I was not that enthused with Charlie, but whatever made my mother happy – that was what was important.

Graduation and a Regular Army Commission: As a married man I was the most admired guy among the bachelors – I was going to school and my wife was supporting me. Can you beat that? I didn't even feel guilty. However, the one room apartment was not the envy of anyone. It was crowded with the kitchenette right in our living- room/bedroom combination, with the bathroom, in the hallway, shared with others. We even sponsored a party in that small place, to celebrate our wedding and invited our school friends. Sometime later, I got sick with the flu and Paula's cousin, doctor Murray Hoffstein, made a house call – doctors did that in those days. But everything was only for the short term, from November '48 to June '49 when I was to graduate.

One month before that, in May of '49, my friend George and I, in our 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Reserve capacity, elected to attend a two-week course in Intelligence entitled 'Surreptitious Entry'; it was a real eye-opener what Intelligence personnel were trained to be able to do. We were placed on active duty for the time of the course. This had unintended consequences when we graduated. Actually, because of the course we missed the College graduation ceremony and my Regular Army, Second Lieutenant Commissioning as a Distinguished Military Graduate. But now in June '49 it was time to pack and kiss New York good bye. I had already been seasoned with good-byes, but it was harder on Paula to leave her family; that was a very tearful good-bye.

But we were off. We had bought a 1949 Chevrolet, my first car, and we arranged to travel across half the country behind the car of my friend George. That made the trip a little more sociable when we stayed overnight in motels along the way to Kansas. At our subsequent formal swearing in, our date of rank, which would have been June 15, 1949 along with all other ROTC graduates, had to be adjusted to take care of the two weeks of active duty, i.e. June 2, 1949. However the West Point graduating class had a date of rank of June 3, and wouldn't you know it, that was that date which came out on our orders and to make it absolutely clear, our standing was right behind the last man of the entire West Point Class – I wonder how that happened? There was no sense to brood over this, it did not seem that important at the time and in any event we were ahead of the entire ROTC class country-wide. But some years later, when there was a slow-down of promotions to Captain, we had to wait a full year to allow the West Point class to be promoted before our turn was reached; you just never know what is going to be important.

Ground General School at Fort Riley, Kansas: Just when you are ready to go to work after graduating from College with all that schooling, the Army makes you go back to school. Yet there was a good reason to do this. In the ROTC courses, as well as in West Point, the lessons were honing in on tactics, weapons and much history background information, but there was nothing taught on how to administratively and in a managerial way run a Platoon or a Company. To prepare you for that task, the Ground General School was established. Here, the West Point graduates and the ROTC graduates melded. It was interesting to note that in a general sense, the ROTC graduates were more street wise and had more knowledge about getting along in the community; the West Pointers had a far better background in military matters. More of the ROTC graduates were married and a bit longer than a number of West Point graduates who could not marry while in College, but many married right after graduation. I was an old married man with almost one year of such experience. I had no problems with the course work and studied along with my friend George.

George was very concerned about some of the physical training aspects of the course. There was an obstacle course that had to be mastered and he insisted that we visit the site the day before it was scheduled. I never realized that he thought of me as physically more proficient and I was flattered. I showed him how I would master the course and he did quite well – he just needed reinforcement. In another way, George was there to help me. The pay of a married 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant was very meager for subsisting. Any month which had more than 30 days became a problem and George had to come up with lending me a few dollars so that we could end the month without a hardship. The only good month would be February! We graduated in December and here we needed to leave George. With my basic branch in Military Police I was destined for two years of combat branch training in Infantry, while his Quartermaster branch guided him for two years into Artillery.

After our graduation I attended the wedding of another young Jewish West Pointer, Lou Zickel. We stayed in touch with Lou; his wife nagged him to leave the Army and he regretted that action many years later. We started on the trip from Kansas to New York right after the wedding to see family before my next schooling assignment. As I began to drive, the snow started to fall and the weather kept getting worse. I should have stopped at the nearest motel, but we were quite anxious to get home. I got behind a big truck and allowed it to pave the way, the visibility in the snowstorm was miserable. Had he crashed, we would have crashed along with him. But luck was with us and we finally did stop at a motel when it got dark. The next day, the snow had stopped, the plows had done their work, and the rest of the trip was uneventful.

Infantry Officers Basic at Fort Benning, Georgia: We had a fine vacation with our respective families in New York City, but it was brief. I had to report to the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia to receive further schooling in the Basic Infantry Officers Course, for another six months. The school provided instruction in basic Infantry tactics at the Platoon and Company level and how to form a combat team when reinforced with tanks and other weapon systems. When they staged an attack scenario of a combined tank and infantry offensive, a movie could not have done a better job – it was so impressive and one was convinced that such an attack was bound to be successful since no one could survive that fire power in a combat situations. Near the end of the course and in accordance with my submitted wish list for future assignments, I came out on orders to go to Germany. But then in the late spring of 1950, the Korean War erupted and all bets were off concerning assignments. Soon many who had been assigned to go to Germany had their orders changed to either Japan or Korea. I heard that my friend George was destined that way. I held my breath, but my orders stayed without change, probably because I spoke German. I was off to Germany again, but this time accompanied by my wife Paula.

To Germany –Thank God it is not Berlin! The trip overseas was quite different from what I had imagined. Although we had coordinated travel order, that did not work on the Army Transport. As a Second Lieutenant I was placed with three other Lieutenants in a small stateroom while Paula had to bunk with three other wives. Additionally I was on a duty roster for guard duty, overseeing an eight hour guard shift; it was not a pleasure cruise. While my orders directed me to Germany, they did not indicate the specific assignment. It was the summer of 1950 and the Berlin airlift had just ended. Paula was quite nervous about the pending assignment and kept hoping that it would not be Berlin, the continuing trouble spot. Upon landing in Bremerhaven we received our orders. I was assigned to the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in Bamberg, with duty station at Grafenwoehr. “Grafenwoehr, where is that?” I had no idea, but I said to Paula: “At least it is not Berlin!” We got to Bamberg where I procured quarters in an apartment building and where we bought a small German shepherd puppy whose papers indicated that his name was ‘Duke von Bettelsee’. A German Maid was furnished with the apartment and paid for by German reparations; unfortunately she did not speak one word of English. I then I left for 27 days for the training area of Grafenwoehr. Paula was all alone without anyone contacting her. There was little conversation with the maid since Paula’s German was practically non-existent at that time; the only positive facet was Dukie, the dog. When I finally returned to Bamberg from maneuvers, Paula was ready to return to the States, particularly since after three days in Bamberg I was off again to Grafenwoehr. Finally Paula made friends with some Infantry wives who had a completely different vision; they were happy that their husbands were away on maneuvers and they could do whatever they wanted to do. At one point Paula was able to accompany one wife who knew her way around, to visit me in Grafenwoehr. The facilities for visitors were very primitive and the two of us had cots in a parameter tent. The only hope that I could offer was that the Infantry duty was but a temporary arrangement for no longer than two years, because then I would transfer to the Military Police which did not have these extensive field duties – it was not much of a comfort. However fate intervened and orders came for some of us to transfer to the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, which was being formed at Grafenwoehr for future stationing in Berlin. I was on those orders. At this point, Paula was ready to move anywhere as long as it was away from Grafenwoehr, even to Berlin.

A Berlin Assignment: After Christmas 1950, the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was finally ready to move to Berlin. I was assigned as the Platoon Leader of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I&R) Platoon, a part of Headquarters Company. Captain Barton was the Company Commander, my boss, and Lieutenant Wallace was the Executive Officer. Each Officer was authorized to proceed to Berlin at his own discretion. I packed our belongings into the car along with Paula and Dukie, got in, and we said good-bye to Bamberg, not shedding one tear. When we reached Helmstead, we processed through our Military Police checkpoint and were cautioned not to allow the German Volkspolizei to interfere with our travel; we were only to be processed by Russian soldiers. At the checkpoint, we met Lieutenant Wallis and his wife Sue. Paula took an instant liking to her and they became best friends in Berlin.

The Army life in Berlin was in sharp contrast with the life in Bamberg; instead of 3 days home and 27 days in the field, in Berlin it was 27 days at home and 3 in the field and the field duty was right next door in the Grunewald. We were assigned a small villa; the address was Am Fischthal in the Zehlendorf district of Berlin. It had been a lovely German home with a garden in the rear of the house which Dukie appropriated. The villa had been ‘requisitioned’ by the Military Government and the owner had to make arrangements elsewhere. Along with the villa came a maid, paid for with German reparation money. It was not someone who I would have hired and I was not sure how to ‘trade her in’. She did not seem to like our dog since we often found him locked in the bathroom when we came home unexpectedly. In discussions with Paula she opined that all the inmates of concentration camps had been criminals; Paula asked her: “Even the children?” - There was no answer. In retrospect, we should have gotten her fired as a Nazi sympathizer.

My work detail in the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was much more to my liking. I suggested to the Captain that I should make a reconnaissance to select observation posts which could provide secure monitoring of the Russian Sector. He agreed but cautioned that I must avoid contacting any Germans; this meant that I could only decide the selected places from the street, but that had to suffice until it was actually going to be used. One novel situation opened up for me. I had made contact with a helicopter unit and they were interested in coordinating their training with my mission. We started to work together by my designating landing places for the helicopter for their review. One problem became obvious immediately; our radios did not have a frequency match. We reported that to our respective headquarters, but I know that the problem was no solved for many years.

Leading a Platoon was a challenging job. There were always personnel problems to be dealt with and training had to be provided. I was busy all day long, but at least I could sleep at home. The job I had was very interesting and challenging, here I did not mind my Infantry assignment. At one point I was appointed Defense Council; this provided me with a new challenge, to act like a lawyer. To the chagrin of the command, I won the case and got three soldiers off criminal theft charges with a ‘not guilty’ decision. That terminated my Defense Council assignment. I often wondered after that, if I should have tried to become a lawyer.

I had been a Second Lieutenant for 1 ½ years, along with all others who had attended school with me and it was time for our promotion to First Lieutenant. Unfortunately, the Regimental Commander felt that he had not had enough time to observe us, to see if we were suitable for promotion. That came as a blow because all those who had stayed with the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in Bamberg were promoted. As luck would have it, one in our group was the son of a three-star General – he wrote his father – by the time his father replied, we all had our promotion orders in hand.

In August, the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment received a training requirement and had to participate in field maneuvers – guess where – in Grafenwoehr! Paula came from Berlin to visit me on my birthday and we received a room in an Officers Club Annex, which only had one cot for the two of us. I was totally exhausted from the maneuver and slept like a log, while Paula had a miserable night trying to get some sleep; not a ‘Happy Birthday’ experience. But we were happy when the two weeks were over and we were back in Berlin.

At home I had to deal with my curiosity seeking dog; he jumped over our fence and wandered off to a nearby lake and wanted to rule over the swans who were trying to avoid any contact. Dukie, however, encountered the game warden, who chased after him and complained to us about his behavior. We had to watch him more closely and train him not to run off. Overall, Dukie was a very obedient dog and he was trained not to start eating any food until he had permission to do so. One evening we had invited Sue and Vernon Wallis to dinner. Sue and Paula had become great friends. Paula had decided to make the dinner meal featuring liver. This was not Vernon’s favorite food. At one point in time Dukie was alone in the kitchen and he was later joined by Vernon. Still later I heard a shriek from Paula that the liver had disappeared. Vernon pointed to Dukie and charged him with the crime of eating the liver. I pointed to Vernon and charged him with feeding Dukie the liver. Neither ever confessed and this matter remains unsolved to this day. But we had to go out to a restaurant to eat and Vernon smiled all evening since he did not have to eat liver. There were many other interactions with Vernon and Sue. Vernon had bought a new car but was short of cash; he had to make a decision to either get either a radio or a heater to stay within his budget. He made the unfortunate choice of opting for the radio. On cold nights, when the windshield would fog up and he could hardly see where he was going, we told him to just turn the radio up a bit louder -- that should take care of the fog! On another occasion Paula and Sue were talking and Paula had to back-up the car to be able to drive off, unfortunately she failed to see that a 2 ½ ton truck had parked behind her; our car ended up in the repair shop. At one point, Paula and Sue went to the movies where they were showing the film which showed the crimes committed by the Nazis and the killing of innocents incarcerated in concentration camps. After that experience Paula was unable to sleep at night. To this day she avoids seeing any movies that show concentration camp atrocities.

On Paula’s birthday I hired a band, snuck the members into our house and when Paula came home they started playing South American music which we both liked. What a great surprise! The band was called ‘Lucho’ and had played in our Officers Club; even as a First Lieutenant I was able to afford them in Berlin. Unfortunately, our days in Berlin were numbered. General Eisenhower thought it was too risky for the military to have so many dependents living in Berlin and he ordered all accompanied officers to be transferred out of the city. Thus, after my welcomed one year of Berlin duty, I suddenly was back in Bamberg with the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, and therefore back in Grafenwoehr. For my 3rd birthday there, I now was able to get a room in the Officers Club proper, not the Annex, with a large bed; at least that was an improvement. But I was getting angry because my two years of Infantry duty were over and I had not received orders to terminate that assignment and to finally place me into the realm of my basic branch, the Military Police. I complained by letter to the MP Branch and subsequently orders arrived placing me into the 1<sup>st</sup> MP Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (the Big Red One) stationed in Darmstadt.

Darmstadt: I reported to Captain Bentley, the Company Commander of the 1st MP Company, First Infantry Division, sewed on my 1<sup>st</sup> Division patch, and changed my Infantry brass insignias to the crossed MP pistols. I was very happy to do that. Captain Bentley advised me that as soon as the next MP Officer Orientation Course in Oberammergau would start, he would send me there. It was a two week course, teaching basic police tactics and it was to be a vacation for Paula. We received a room in the Eibsee Hotel in Garmisch and I commuted to Oberammergau for my instructions. While I was studying, Paula was having a ball. The Hotel was designed to provide all kinds of recreational options for the troops and their dependents stationed in Germany. The Hotel was situated at the 'Eibsee' lake within a valley in the Alps – a beautiful scenery. We tried to recapture this good time a few years later, but we learned that it does not take very long for a hotel to become a very big disappointment when maintenance is forgotten. The Hotel had been requisitioned from German ownership and when it was eventually returned it was no longer a paradise. But in 1952 it was a dream and we hated to leave. The two week course arrangement reminded me of my Intelligence instruction in Le Vesinet during World War II. It provided me with just a smattering of knowledge and I realized that I needed far more instructions to be prepared to lead a Platoon of military policemen and teach them law enforcement procedures. I was well prepared to lead a Platoon administratively and in a leadership capacity, this I had gained in the Infantry, but not in police work. In my future career I found repeatedly that the schooling I received would have been extremely valuable in my prior assignment, so it was here. There was but one saving grace, it is better to realize that you do not have all the answers, than to think that you know it all, when that is not true.

The 1<sup>st</sup> MP Company had a war mission, to be prepared to move out on contingencies and to block a local bridge, which was practiced periodically. I had plenty of experience for that type of missions which could equally be performed with Infantry troops. Also my World War II experience served me well when it came to Prisoner of War control, civilian detention and straggler control. Thus, on the tactical side of MP work (opposed to the law enforcement side), I felt well qualified. Periodically, personnel of the Company were detailed to help the local Provost Marshal to patrol the town, but personally, my mission, as a Platoon leader, was to primarily train the men in my Platoon for the war mission and to participate in Honor Guards. This work was done under the auspices of the Division Provost Marshal. Occasionally I was detailed to help supervise the operational work of the local Provost Marshal and then it was for me 'on-the-job training'.

The cold war mission we were on provided personnel with relatively easy access to weapons. While we had Standard Operating Provisions (SOP's) to secure weapons after duty performance, it was still easy to circumvent them. One soldier at Christmas time got so depressed, presumably for being away from his family and a break-up with his local girlfriend, he decided to commit suicide. He went into the arms room and told the Armorer that there had been a change in the guard duty roster and that he needed his weapon. He got his assigned weapon, walked outside of the barrack and shot himself. In the subsequent investigation there was blame all around but nothing much was done, except a small change in the SOP, that the Armorer needed an order from an officer before authorizing personnel, not on the duty roster, to draw a weapon.

Another fatality occurred. The unit got four motorcycles issued, on a trial basis, to see if they ought to be issued to other MP units. Those bikes are extremely useful in traffic control, since they can snake through a traffic jam to determine its cause. We assigned four soldiers to ride them and gave them training. They were to wear their helmets when on duty riding the

bikes, since everyone knew that the bikes could be dangerous in case of an accident. The four bikers were detailed to participate in an Armed Forces Day parade. After they completed that duty, they relaxed a bit and took off their helmets on the way home. Unfortunately, PFC Lawhorn hit an oil spot on the road; the bike slipped out from under him and as he crashed; his head hit the pavement. He was dead 48 hours after arriving at the hospital. The subsequent investigation resulted in the withdrawal of the bikes from our unit and from general issue. The motorcycles were deemed too dangerous for general use. These fatal incidents involving members of my Platoon kept me ever vigilant and constantly on guard; yet how can you predict the unpredictable - - -

Paula and I resided on the upstairs floor of a villa requisitioned from Germans by the Army. As in Bamberg and Berlin, the German government was required to pay for a maid who came with each requisitioned residence. In our villa, the first floor was occupied by a Warrant Officer and his wife. Paula indicated to me that there seemed to be some suspicious behavior since she noted a German police car in front of the house and some German lady entering our building quite frequently. It did not take long to figure out what was happening. The Warrant Officer had a girlfriend and slept with her in the attic, while his wife had an affair with a German Policeman downstairs. Was this a police matter? I decided that it was not my business as long as there was no disturbance. We let the matter rest, except that I received periodic updates from Paula who just could not believe that this was happening in our building.

Then there was our dog. Dukie was able to go down the stairs, exit the building which had an inside door handle, pick up our newspaper and bring it upstairs; it was quite amazing. Of course little incidents could happen, like when the door shut on him and he could not open the knob from the outside; then the paper would end up distributed all over the lawn. One day we came home and found him outside of our building. We were sure we had left him in the apartment and our door had been locked. Could we have locked him out by accident? No, it became clearer on the next incident. We found out that he was able to jump off the balcony from the second floor and land safely on the lawn below. He seemed to enjoy waiting for us on the outside better than in the house. We had to lock the door to the balcony.

In the days of the Occupation, we were always required to wear the uniform while in the public domain. Paula has a fair complexion and Germans always seemed to assume that she was German – never Jewish or even American; this was the mindset by the Germans. For example, we would go to a German Restaurant, I would order the food, but the waiter would always address Paula, since obviously she was the German and I, in US uniform, would not understand German. This happened consistently. One weekend we decided to go to town and eat in a prominent hotel in downtown Darmstadt. In front of this hotel was a big sign, in German, indicating that the enterprise was rebuilt and supported with Marshal Plan aid. As we entered the restaurant, the German receptionist looked us over with apparent disgust and advised us that the restaurant was full and that we could not be seated. We were astounded since there seemed to be very few parked cars in front. We exited the restaurant, looked into the window and saw all kind of empty tables. I was furious. Apparently the receptionist had assumed that here was an American soldier (rank was hard to identify) with his German Fraulein and they wanted no part of us. I returned to my headquarters, put on my military police gear and arranged for an operating MP patrol to take me back to the hotel. I entered and asked for the manager. In my good German I proceeded to ream him out, questioning him about the Marshal Plan funding and advised him of the consequences he could face with this obvious discrimination against Americans. Sheepishly he admitted to what I had suspected. I explained that he had no right to

discriminate against any member of the US Forces. Thereafter, we checked the hotel frequently but never again was any evidence of discrimination. It felt great to tell a German off about the evils of discrimination; I was sure that this hotel, some years back, had carried a sign: "Juden Verboten".

The maid in or house was another problem. She was an elderly lady and tried to act motherly towards us. Her family had been in the baking business and she offered to bake for us whenever we needed a cake. Paula observed that the sugar seemed to disappear; as soon as she bought some, within days there was a need to buy some more. We had company coming; we had invited Captain Bentley, my Company Commander and his wife to dinner. Our maid had baked a cake. The dinner came off well, but everyone seemed to make a funny face when they bit into the cake. I did as well and was ready to spit it out – it was salty. It appeared that the maid had used salt instead of sugar when she baked it. Paula gave her the cake and told her to take it home. The next day, the maid confessed that her mother had scolded her and that she had confused the sugar with the salt. Thereafter the sugar no longer disappeared.

In April 1952 it was 'Fasching' - carnival season in Germany. At the local university they had a big Fasching's party and everyone was invited. Costumes were necessary and I, along with others, slipped costume outfits over our uniforms. With my German, no one suspected that I was an American soldier and it was interesting to hear what the students had to say about the Americans; lots were not flattering. The next day, we received an order from higher headquarters that under no circumstances could anyone wear a costume over the uniform. That ended the costume parties for us.

1952 was the year that the Occupation ended; the German government could again rule by its own laws and the Military Government of the US Army in Germany ceased to function. We had always enforced a very strict 50 MPH speed limit on the Autobahn; violators were ticketed by our MP Highway Patrol. These contacts were the most frequent interaction between German civilians and the US Force; and the Germans hated that. So, the first action taken by the new German Government was to eliminate the speed limit on the Autobahn. Of course the accident rate skyrocketed, but the Germans would not budge; they had hated our restriction that much, that even the deaths in car crashes were disregarded. The only allowance made was that they imposed a minimum speed to prevent the older vehicles, which sauntered along the Autobahn at 25 MPH speeds, would not obstruct the Mercedes going 80 or 90 MPH. Only many years later, speed restrictions were imposed along dangerous stretches of curves on the Autobahn, but in general no upper speed limit remained in force when I last left Germany in 1974.

Wuerzburg: While Darmstadt was a nice enough city, the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division needed more room and decided to move to another city, to Wuerzburg. There the Division moved into a German Army Kaserne, while families moved into a newly built apartment complex. The scenery from there was not very pretty, all the trees had been cut down and when my mother visited us with Charlie, she criticized this quite heavily. We took my mother and her husband on a trip to Rothenburg where Charlie conferred with the owner of a piano store and played his German music on the piano. On the way back the car broke down and we had to spend another day or two waiting for it to be fixed. When we returned it was time again for maneuvers in Grafenwoehr. But by now I had made contacts and Paula and I were able to take over the apartment of a Jewish Gasthaus owner. That certainly was much more comfortable than all the previous times there.

Finally, I did not even mind Grafenwoehr. I had to supervise the MP patrols which policed the town and we tried to assure that we would extract any drunken soldiers before they got into trouble. I parked my jeep in the rear of the Gasthaus and was able to monitor all the radio transmissions, even when off duty. At one point I heard the transmission that there was trouble in the Gasthaus downstairs. I gathered my MP gear quickly and was downstairs before my patrol arrived. There was a drunken soldier standing in the middle of the floor threatening others with a broken beer bottle. He was a very tall and a strong fellow. I went over to him and told him that an MP patrol with real big fellows were on the way, but here I was much smaller than them and that I was no threat to him at all – therefore, give me the bottle before they arrive and arrest you; to my surprise, he did. When the patrol arrived they could not figure out how I got there so quickly and that there was no disturbance any more - a buddy had taken the drunken soldier back to his billets. For my mother all that action was too much for her and she was happy to return to her home in the States.

Dukie had a good time in Wuerzburg. One of our neighbors had two little girls in the 6-8 year range and they often came to the house and asked Paula if Frankie could come out and play with them. What they meant was that I should bring Dukie out and they would play with the dog. He loved them since they paid so much attention to him and he loved his ball which they could throw endlessly. But whenever a German worker would approach, Dukie would become very protective and those workers kept in a wide circle away from him. Germans knew how German Shepherds could be vicious, as when they were used against concentration camp inmates.

Visiting Cousin Kurt in Holland: Officers and enlisted personnel in the First Division worked very hard and for long hours, but the Army was very good about time off. We could take leave for 30 days each year. On one occasion, we decided to visit my mother's first cousin Kurt who, along with his wife Fanny, had survived the concentration camps, while his son David had died there. They had returned to Amsterdam in Holland, to where they had fled unsuccessfully before the war. Kurt was a fashion designer and was employed by a Dutch fashion company, making a substantial salary. When we arrived, we saw that he had invited a fairly large group of Jewish friends. And as we entered, a sudden silence fell across the entire group. The stares were not friendly, as Kurt was trying to introduce us. And then it dawned upon him, Paula is quite fair and looked like she might be German. His friends were under the impression that I had brought my German wife to meet with them. It took us a considerable time and answers to cross examining questions before all were convinced that both of us were Jewish and that Paula was not German. It had not helped when Paula showed them what she thought was a tiny Jewish star on her necklace, which turned out to have only five corners and was actually a Russian star which her mother had given her. But once they were convinced, there was no problem, we were accepted and the party continued in a festive spirit. However, Kurt could never again become comfortable in Holland; he could not get his 1942 deportation out of his mind, particularly since he was still next door to Germany. Within a few years he left Holland and immigrated to the US where he first assumed a job as a dishwasher. He preferred that over his well-paid job in Holland; he felt safer in the States. A couple of years later, he was 'discovered' as a fashion designer in Los Angeles and thereafter he again made a comfortable salary. Fanny died at the age of 85 and Kurt at the ripe old age of 94; physically they had survived very well, but psychologically they continued to have problems till the very end. They never could get over the death of their son and they constantly had to change residences, in view of their continuing

suspicions about ‘Nazi’ neighbors who were trying to poison or gas them – for them it was easier to see an enemy than a friend. The Holocaust had mentally impaired a couple of more victims.

#### An Incident in Nick’s Restaurant in Wuerzburg:

Food was quite good in Germany and we ate out quite a lot, most of the time it was in German restaurants. But our favorite restaurant in Wuerzburg was the Capri. It was owned by an Italian named Nick Camillo; he had become a prisoner of the Germans near the end of the war, when Italy quit the Nazi alliance, had been brought to Wuerzburg for internment and decided to stay there after the war by opening the first post-war Italian restaurant in Germany. The food he served was delicious and we became constant patrons. The biggest problem was that we always ate too much; we could never decide if we should order the pizza or a spaghetti dish, so we ended up ordering both. Nick had a girlfriend named Janine who was a dancer in the Nuernberg Opera House and we all became such good friends that we invited each other into our homes. In one instance, Janine danced the Bolero for us in our home; she was tremendous! And then it happened, Nick perpetrated what some might consider one of the dastardly crimes of the decade. He married Janine, took her out of the Opera House and placed her into his restaurant kitchen to cook the spaghetti. We could never forgive him for that!

In those days of the early 50s, his customers were mainly Americans; the Germans were still prejudiced against Italian cooking. That changed in later years; the last time we were there in 1974, all his customers were German, except for us. As was the German custom, patrons were seated together at tables as they arrived, regardless if they knew each other. And so on one day, we were seated with an American Corporal and his German girlfriend. She had just returned from a trip to England and excitedly decided to tell us all about it. The only problem with England she opined was that there were so many “stinking Jews”. Paula was going to pursue this. With her best smile and moving ever closer to the girl, she pretended sympathy for her observation. “Isn’t it difficult to discern who is a Jew?” Paula asked. Without allowing her to answer, she continued: “Oh, by the way, I am Jewish!” The Corporal grabbed the girl and pulled her out of the restaurant without finishing or paying for the meal. I was angry with Paula for embarrassing the soldier. Years later we discussed this incident again but then I realized that my anger stemmed from my background in Germany where I was taught to never make any waves, to keep quiet, and never to embarrass anyone for their prejudices. It had been a poor recipe for survival. Paula had been absolutely correct in her behavior; it was me who was wrong for being angry. And incidentally, later in the film Exodus, Paul Newman did the same thing while dealing with the British – he had probably heard of Paula’s comments in Germany!

#### Chapter XI: BACK TO THE STATES

Fort Gordon, GA: My three year tour in Germany was over and in 1953 we sailed back to the States on an Army ship, but this time I had a room with Paula, although it was located way down in the hull of the ship, next to the generator room. It was so hot there; we had to keep the door to our cabin open during the whole trip. At one point there was a fire alarm and no one on my level seemed to hear it; I did since my door was open. I had to knock on all the doors and then the safety doors were shut and there was only one stairway open for us. Luckily the electrical fire was quickly extinguished but we all got a good scare.

I was ordered to attend a three month Associate MP Officers Course at Fort Gordon, GA. Sure enough, it taught me all the things I should have been doing with my Platoon in the 1<sup>st</sup> MP Company. We lived in an apartment building and had to start buying some furniture. Paula had to impose on a neighbor's washing machine since it made no sense to buy one for that short period. We certainly had to plan on buying more items at my next duty station. All the time at Fort Gordon I was hoping that my promotion to Captain would finally come through. Promotions had really slowed down and it took a year to promote all the West Pointers who had my date of rank. By being placed at the end of the West Point class, I was the last one promoted, but still ahead of my ROTC class. At least I would arrive at my next assignment as a Captain.

Fort Niagara, NY: I was anxious to see what my next assignment was going to be. My branch kept me sweating till the very end and then I found out that the Provost Marshal at Fort Niagara had just been relieved for misconduct and that I was destined to replace him. We had stopped in New York City to see family and then took the New York Thruway through the whole State till almost the end and cut through Niagara Falls to Youngstown, NY. There we rented the upstairs of a house that on one end jutted out over the Niagara River. It had a beautiful view. The landlord was a Mr. Hurd who, although not educated had amassed quite a number of real estate rentals in town. We lived there during my entire tour from 1954 – 1956.

I reported to Colonel Bach at Post Headquarters, who was the Commander of the Nike site, the only tactical unit at the Fort, and I was to serve on his staff. I was briefed that the prior Provost Marshal somehow had located his headquarters in town within a restaurant owned by a reputedly Mafia member, but no further details were forthcoming. The point was that my headquarters will again be on Post, which was certainly what I had assumed.

The location of the Post was very picturesque. At the far end was Old Fort Niagara, a National Park, which bordered on Lake Ontario and had many visitors. The Post stretched between the Old Fort and Youngstown; visitors to the Old Fort had to traverse through our Post. I immediately made contact with the one Policeman who was located in Youngstown and came to an understanding that any civilian visitors who might get in trouble on Post would be brought to him and hence to the local Justice of the Peace. I was not going to have any problems with civilian visitors, my problems were going to be with the personnel assigned to the Post – and there were many problems, but I did not know that at my arrival.

My first problem concerned vehicle registration. Apparently, the secretary to the Post Commander, had vehicle registration No. 1 and that was widely resented. She was a middle aged divorcee and had many contacts on and off Post; some thought that she acted like she was the Post Commander. I was not going to get entangled in that fight as my first order of business. But it showed me that there were many strains within the staff. My indorsing officer (the rating officer of my rater), a Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Arnold, was the Deputy Post Commander. He was a West Pointer who had been passed over for promotion. That was a tip off. It appeared that there were many officers assigned to Fort Niagara who had some prior problems and Fort Niagara was an out-of-the-way place where they could not do much harm; or so it was thought in the assignment branches in Washington, DC.

My immediate boss and my rater was Major Baranowski, he was the Adjutant and Personnel Officer of the Post. I got along very well with him. The Comptroller was Captain Larry Kellam, we became good friends; he and his wife and twins (a boy and a girl aged 7 when we met) lived on post and were well acquainted with all the officers at the Fort. The three of us, Baranowski, Kellam and I, would confer on all problems which surfaced. The Provost Marshal

Office was very austere. I had a small Detachment of MP's of about two dozen men who patrolled the Post and staffed my office; I was the only officer.

It did not take long before I was actively involved in the various problems involving the assigned officers on Fort Niagara; I had later been urged to write a book about it, but I never did; so, unfortunately many stories have been forgotten. The first problem I encountered enmeshed the Commander's Secretary again. She complained about receiving obscene phone calls from a Captain who was the Commander of the Headquarters Company on the Post and who also served as the Club Officer. We thought that the easiest way to solve the problem was for her to change her home phone number. She did, but two days later she came back to tell me that the Captain had somehow obtained her new number. Upon investigation I found out that he had contacted the local phone company posing as a linesman up on a pole trying to repair a phone line and with that subterfuge obtained the new phone number. He was counselled by the Post Commander to quit playing games. The Captain was a bit of an alcoholic, so it made perfect sense, at Fort Niagara, for him to be the Club Officer. In that capacity he was very helpful when the nearby Canadian troops came to visit with their bag pipes, to open up the Club for a party, which then projected into the residential quarters where the bag pipers would sneak into the entry ways of the houses and suddenly start playing their instruments to the scare and consternation of the residents. To preserve good international relations, this incident was neatly pushed under the rug.

The next incident was a charge by one of the wives, that her husband, a Major, would come home and rape her. I conferred with the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) located in Rochester, since they had jurisdiction for felony charges, but they declined to get involved. Again, counseling by the Post Commander was the outcome. Another counseling case was the misbehavior of the Deputy Post Commander. At a New Year's Eve party, he had grabbed the Chaplain's wife and soul-kissed her to the point that others observed how her cheeks had been wiggled by way of the LTC's tongue. It was the talk of the Post.

But the misbehavior of officers was not the only entanglement at Fort Niagara. There were also some very pleasant activities where I became involved. Youngstown, the town adjacent to the Fort, where I resided, had a 100 year jubilee. Everyone in town was to grow a beard. I was asked but had to decline based on Army regulations which did not permit beards – so I grew a mustache. There were lots of parties and I became friendly with many of the town people who owned stores. I even found out that the supposed Mafia membership of the restaurant owner who had gotten the prior Provost Marshal in trouble was grossly exaggerated, but I kept my distance.

The major case of my Fort Niagara assignment did not end with counseling. It involved the Post Engineer, Captain Heuermann. He was a strange bird. He boasted about his PHD and yet we found him reading comic books in his office; the presumption was that he was a bizarre academic. His wife and two young children lived with him on Post. At one point he showed off his brand new automobile and he gave Captain Kellam a ride; Kellam noted that the speedometer showed just a few miles. The next day Kellam came into my office with a paper signed by Heuermann requesting reimbursement for a Temporary Duty (TDY) trip to Rochester, NY allegedly performed in his newly purchased car – there was no way that this could have happened. I conferred with Major Baranowski and we decided to check on his credentials. To cut a long story short, we found out that Heuermann did not have a PHD from NYU, actually he did not even have a Bachelor's degree; he had dropped out as a sophomore. Additionally, his officer commission was fraudulent, it emanated from his prior appointment as a Warrant Officer when he supposedly had received a Master's Degree and even the Warrant Officer appointment was

fraudulent since it was based on his alleged College degree. In the meantime, we received another complaint from the Post Chaplain; he had a letter from a lady who worked for the Random House publisher. It appeared that Captain Heuermann had represented himself to her as a bachelor who was an Intelligence Agent fleeting around internationally, who had promised to marry her and towards that goal had procured funds from her for the purpose of buying a jointly owned house. The Post Chaplain urged her to call me. After talking to her, I reported to Colonel Bach who immediately placed Captain Heuermann on restriction to the Post, pending a formal Article 32b investigation in advance of trial. But the matter did not finish there. The next week, I receive a report that Captain Heuermann had broken restriction, had traveled to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, contacted the GE Corporation to secure a job based on his PHD and as the Corporation checked his references, his actions became disclosed. The Post Commander now ordered me to proceed to Pittsfield, place Heuermann under arrest and bring him for confinement to Fort Jay in New York City. I did what I was instructed to do and along the way I had to give Mrs. Heuermann a \$20 donation so that she could buy some food for her family. I never found out the final disposition of the case, since it dragged on beyond my assignment to Fort Niagara.

One minor, non-pursued criminal event involved our residence. We had rented the entire second floor of Mr. Hurt's house. One day there was an electric outage that darkened the entire building. In the process of resetting the fuse it became apparent to me that the entire house was on one meter and it was me who was paying the electric bill for the entire house. No wonder that my electric bill had seemed so high; with my complaint, Mr. Hurt who was very handy even with electricity, separated the circuit and installed another meter. My electric bill became much more reasonable.

Paula had little to do in the house, so she got herself a job. She first worked as an Administrative Assistant at the PX and later she became a guide at Old Fort Niagara. She had to read up on the history and then she was able to answer just about all the questions which were posed to her. The elderly Director of the Old Fort became very fond of her and we were again invited to a number of functions sponsored by the Park Authority and the Old Fort.

There were two major events which affected the entire area during my tenure. The first was the Niagara River Ice Jam. The winter of 1955 was extremely cold and the river froze to the point that there were some houses along the river bank which became threatened by the ice. The town turned to the Fort to do something. After lots of procrastination, the Area Engineers were called in and they promised to try to break the jam with demolitions. All kinds of precautions were taken because of the pending explosion; the matter hit the national news. Then on a clear day there was lots of activity on the ice in the middle of the river and after a loud warning horn came a small 'puff' which hardly moved a snowball on the ice; that was the only action taken. After a couple of weeks, the river melted all by itself.

The other action was a staged event by Florence Chadwick, a long-distance swimmer who wanted to swim across Lake Ontario; she was to initiate the swim from the bank of the Lake at the Old Fort. The Old Fort asked for crowd control assistance, which I provided with my MP's. We surrounded Ms. Chadwick as she crossed through our Post to the Old Fort so that the assembled crowd and media would give her enough room to get into the water. A little further to the side was a much younger girl who also wanted to try to beat the Lake. She got into the water without being surrounded by any crowd or the media. Ms. Chadwick had to give up her swim in mid Lake; the young girl ended up on the Canadian side conquering the Lake – but she remained unknown by the media or the public.

The most traumatic event for me during that assignment involved my dog Dukie who I loved dearly. He was so smart. He immediately understood not to get into the flower bed tended to by Mrs. Hurt. He stayed on the winding walkway whenever we exited or entered the house. It became obvious as the days passed that I had acquired an allergy to the dog. His dog dander made me sneeze and cough. We kept Dukie out of the bedroom but it was of no use, my coughing and sneezing became increasingly worse and ended in Asthma attacks, so that I had to see the doctor. His advice was that I must get rid of the dog. At home there was a big decision to be made by Paula, get rid of me or get rid of the dog. For three days I had to sleep in the Bachelor Quarters (BOQ) on post while we were deciding what to do with the dog (or me). We finally decided to ask Captain Kellam if he was willing to take him since his twins were always playing with him and he liked their home. Kellam agreed and Dukie was transferred. They really loved him as well as we did. After we moved away for a number of years and we came back to visit the Kellams, we were so sure that the dog would recognize us. I could tell he was straining to recall as I called him by his name, but it was of no use, he could not remember - what a great disappointment! We had Dukie for seven years and so did the Kellams; after the 14<sup>th</sup> year of his life, we received a tear-stained letter from Barbara Kellam that Dukie had died – to this day I still feel bad and so does Paula; we really loved that dog!

## Chapter XII KOREA

An Unaccompanied Tour: We left Fort Niagara for more Army education, as I had to attend the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. It was a relatively short course and after six months I was off on an unaccompanied tour to Korea. Paula and I drove to New York City where she would stay with her mother and finish college, for a degree in Education – Guidance and Counseling, at CCNY.

When I arrived in Korea I was advised that there was an overage of Captains in the Command and that there were no Company commands available. I was then assigned as a Detachment Commander of a small unit charged with guarding a Top Secret site. I was never told exactly what we were supposed to guard, but it was obvious that a nuclear component was involved. We practiced alerts constantly and I made liaison with the Air Force Officers who were also involved at the site, but on the operational side, and completely divorced from my command. The site was located about 15 miles away from Seoul, in a gorgeous setting which had a decrepit dam and potentially a natural small lake. Upon my arrival, I started immediately with my soldiers to repair the dam and to prepare the small lake for swimming. My Detachment was assigned to the 728<sup>th</sup> MP Battalion and I invited all the Battalion key personnel to come and relax and swim at our lake. It soon became a recreational hot spot for the Battalion and my popularity grew with the lake participation. My non-accompanied tour was going to last for 15 months and I would not have minded had I stayed there for the entire time. But this was not a career enhancing assignment and at about the half-way mark, I was assigned as the Executive Officer of Company D, 728<sup>th</sup> MP Battalion at ASCOM City (an American made complex) not too far from Seoul. Captain Omer Williams was the current Commander and I was to replace him when he departed. Omer and I got along very well, in our off-duty time we played chess and he consistently beat me. He was an Engineer by training and had initiated many small projects to enhance the Company Compound. We had a Houseboy who tended to our equipment and made the beds, we had an easy life that way and could concentrate on the Company mission, which was primarily training to prepare and release our troops for operational Military Police duty throughout

ASCOM City. The Provost Marshal, LTC Nichols was charged with this operational mission and he too resided in our compound.

After Omer Williams departed I took command of the company. My first mission was to energize our alert status. When an alert was announced, everyone was to load up all equipment so that we could move the unit as ordered. This was rehearsed monthly and the routine was to load, inspect and unload. I suspected that my kitchen and motor pool were not playing this straight and on my first alert I ordered the Company to move out, to proceed to a traffic circle about a ¼ mile away and then return to the compound. It was revealing how much equipment had been left behind. The next alert worked considerably better.

The unit had adopted a 12 year old boy, an orphan, who slept in one of the barracks, had a foot locker, closet and bunk like the rest of the soldiers and stood inspection along with them. This had been arranged by Omer Williams and one of the first questions I received from my Sergeants if I was willing to continue this, since it obviously was not within regulations. I was not about to kick this young kid out into the cold and I agreed to keep the arrangement. Speaking of the cold, I received a mission to guard the unloading of an aircraft at Kimpo airfield; obviously it was an unannounced nuclear component which required guarding. A Colonel was in charge of the overall operation and I submitted my security plan to him for approval. Not hearing anything, I proceeded to deploy my personnel as I had proposed. It was one of the coldest experience in my lifetime. The wind was howling and the temperature was in the single digits and everyone was freezing. The plane was late and I relieved half of my men to get warm. Then the Colonel came and raised hell and promised to take disciplinary action, because half of my men were missing. The plane had still not arrived and I knew I could get the men back in place when I saw it incoming. I tried to explain that, but he was still steaming – it was at this point that I could see the incoming aircraft and I alerted my men to take their posts. Everyone was in place before the plane stopped. There was obviously no problem and the unloading was uneventful. I reported the incident to LTC Nichols but never heard another word about it. (Many years later I heard that LTC Nichols had jumped off the Key Bridge in a suicide, when he was investigated for some financial irregularities).

How to get into more trouble - - - after I had assumed command, I received orders from the 728th MP Commander, LTC Arnold that two CID agents, who were facing trial for black-marketing, were to be assigned to my Company pending court martial action. Since they were high ranking enlisted personnel, I assigned them as my permanent Charge or Quarters (CQ); they could change over from one night to the next to man the phones during non-duty hours. This duty provided a lot of free time for them and they used that to take notes on anything they thought might be wrong within the company and me in particular. The notes they compiled contained the following allegations: (1) I cussed out a Specialist with vile language when he allowed a “slicky-boy” to enter past his guard post, who thereafter stole money from sleeping soldiers, including me. (They did not know that he also took my pistol out of my holster at my bed side, but luckily decided to drop it near the exit where I could recover it). (2) I allowed my houseboy to sleep in a room in the Bachelor Officers Quarters (3) I allowed an orphan to stay in the barracks. (4) The Mess Sergeant was involved in food exchanges with other units and our food was thereby allegedly suffering. (5) The barracks always looked messy. One day, unannounced, a Colonel from 8<sup>th</sup> Army headquarters appeared in my office; he was the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Inspector General, and wanted to discuss the allegations. I tried to explain my position on these matters and started telling him that the houseboy usually slept on a cot in the hallway and only used the BOQ room when it became empty. The Colonel stopped me right there and said don’t

start to lie, is he in the BOQ room now or not? It was not a good start. The Colonel took notes and without committing himself he indicated he would be back. On a Friday morning, some weeks later, I had called for an inspection and did not like what I saw and indicated I would re-inspect an hour later. It could not have been a better time when the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Colonel reappeared. He wanted to inspect the unit. I offered to get him a cup of Coffee before we started and we headed for the messhall. Only the Mess Sergeant and one customer, a soldier, were in it and he happened to be my worst example of my sodiers, he had received numerous Article 15 punishments from me for misbehaving. The Colonel asked him: "How is the food here?" I held my breath awaiting the answer. The soldier looked at me and looked at the Mess Sergeant and said: "Sir, this is the best food you can get in the entire US Army!" – He knew, that with the wrong answer, the Mess Sergeant could cut him off. It was a good start! The Colonel then wanted to speak to the soldier who had allegedly been cursed by me. The soldier reported to him and upon questioning him of the incident he said that he was lucky not to have been court martialed and that the verbal reprimand he had received was entirely warranted and appropriate under the circumstances. The Colonel now requested to inspect the barracks. We first proceeded to the BOQ where I showed him the room where my houseboy had slept, which was now occupied by my newly arrived Lieutenant and I showed him the houseboy's bunk in the hallway. By now, all the soldiers who were expecting my re-inspection stood by their bunks. The Colonel went down the line, not saying a word until he came upon my orphan who was also at attention. He indicated that there was a small discrepancy in his footlocker display and the boy immediately corrected it and was shaking nervously. The Colonel said: "Don't worry about this, it's not a big problem" and proceeded on with the inspection. He had nothing else to say and departed. Two weeks later, LTC Driscoll, the new ASCOM Provost Marshal called me into his office and presented me with a Letter of Commendation from the 8<sup>th</sup> Army IG. What a relief, and nothing was said about our orphan! The two CID Agents were finally tried and convicted and left my Company with a dishonorable discharge.

One command-wide operation disturbed me greatly. There was a problem of soldiers leaving their assigned billets for the night to spend that time with their local girlfriend. Bed checks were initiated and many were found to be missing. The Commanding General directed Military Police to go through the civilian houses in the nearby town and arrest any soldier found in these houses. This was an obscene operation. MP's would not even bother to knock. They busted through the doors and if they found a soldier, he would be arrested and if no GI was there, there would not even be an apology. Since my duties as Company Commander involved administrative duties and the operational mission was under the jurisdiction of the Provost Marshal, I was not personally involved – but my men were. I submitted my objection to the Provost Marshal but was told that this was based on the orders of the Commanding General and it was out of my jurisdiction to interfere. Later I questioned myself if I really had done everything I could – perhaps I should have tried to bring my objection personally to the Commanding General. The point, of course was, that this was no way to teach democratic practices to a Korean population. This was such a gross violation of privacy and illegal search and seizure was involved, which never could have occurred in the States. And the irony of course was that the violations involved were never the fault of any Koreans, but were strictly the violations of soldiers, which were detectable by a simple and thorough unit bed-check procedure.

At the end of my command tenure, we arranged for a formal Change of Command. Captain Frank Conway, who I had met many years earlier, assumed command. We had all the troops assembled and I handed the Company guidon to the First Sergeant who handed it to

Conway. I was finally ready to go back to the good old USA, and to Paula who I missed on so many days and nights while in Korea.

### Chapter XIII BACK TO THE STATES AGAIN

A CID Assignment in Fort Bragg, North Carolina: I arrived in New York and Paula was waiting for me at the airport. She had received her Bachelor Degree in Education and had participated in student teaching, she was eager to continue. We loaded the car and were off to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. As I entered the State and coasted down an incline which increased my speed, I was pulled over by a State trooper and issued a ticket. Under the existing arrangements, this information was forwarded to the Fort. Not a good way to be introduced to the command. Lucky for me, the ticket was never mentioned when I reported into the command. As a Captain, I was assigned as the Commander of the 125<sup>th</sup> Criminal Investigation Detachment (CID). As such I was designated to command a unit in support of contingency operation of the XIX Airborne Corps on the tactical side and to be the Operations Officer of the CID, supporting the Base Provost Marshal, under the direction of the Commander of the 87<sup>th</sup> CID, a Major who was my immediate boss. In my capacity of CID Operations Officer I had to review the progress of each initiated investigation and had to concur when the investigation was to be closed – either by its resolution or by the lack of any further leads. This was indeed an interesting assignment and quite challenging at times, since our big boss, the Provost Marshal was an alcoholic and it was our concerted mission to keep him out of trouble.

Our biggest case was a bank robbery and murder where we received support from 29 FBI agents who were marshalled overnight. It all started with a report to the MP Desk Sergeant by a walk-in NCO who reported that he had been at an outlying bank field office and the teller had handed him a note. The noted read: "This guy is loitering in the bank, send help". The Desk Sergeant immediately dispatched a patrol and sent the NCO with the note to us in the CID Office. This appeared serious and I dispatched the Duty Agents while I got into another car and headed to the bank. Half way there, I noted a car speeding away in the opposite direction. When I arrived, my Duty Agent asked me to tread carefully and avoid the shell casings which were lying on the floor. The MP patrol explained that when they entered, the telephone cord was still swinging and the bank teller had been shot dead; they just had missed the bank robber.

I utilized a process I had learned in Intelligence to gather and structure all incoming information, a process which the FBI ended copying. Each different clue was placed on a separate sheet of paper under its heading and we recorded every incoming bit of information on one typewriter; when the typewriter sheet had to be changed, we then copied each bit of information under the respective clue headings on every applicable clue sheet. The car I had seen and my agents had seen was our best clue. We interacted well with the FBI agents and the Agent in Charge was Roy K. Moore, who had once famously re-assembled a crashed airplane and thereby solved the murder of a man who sabotaged the plane to kill his mother for the insurance. Within another 24 hours we had the identity of the killer, his name was Bradshaw; he was a discharged soldier who had been in the band and who had visited the NCO Club after the murder. A state-wide alert was issued for his arrest. When I finally got home that evening, I received a call from the Desk Sergeant, to immediately call the Provost Marshal, Col Shuler. I called him and he asked that I immediately post CID Agents around the house of the Commanding General, LTG Sink, since Bradshaw had threatened to kill the CG. This seemed a little bit off the wall and COL Shuler seemed a bit under the influence, but there was no sense

arguing. I made the arrangements while trying to calm the objections of my agents. After I had reassured myself that the perimeter around the CG's house was covered I returned home. No sooner had I entered, another message from the Desk Sergeant to call Col Shuler. I called and he wanted the perimeter widened. Now I understood what he wanted; his house was right next to General Sink's house – he wanted protection for himself, not really for the CG. Without adding any more agents I modified the perimeter to include Shuler's house. I thought that I would now be able to get some sleep. No such luck. I just got into bed when the Desk Sergeant called and said: "Come quick, Bradshaw is in Shuler's house". This was unbelievable! I dressed quickly and raced over to the housing complex – MP vehicles with red lights flashing were all over the area, something obviously had happened. My agents cleared both Shuler's and the CG's house and found nothing except a very perturbed General, a very perturbed Provost Marshal and a very perturbed Provost Marshal's wife. Finally one of my investigators had solved the puzzle. Apparently one of my agents had been in the bushes next to Shuler's house when one of his daughter's came home and, without being briefed about the security problem, screamed when she noted a man in the bushes – the scream was picked up by Shuler's wife and his emergency call to the Desk Sergeant was interpreted that Bradshaw was in the PM's home. I finally got to bed about 3 AM.

The next day had more excitement. The FBI had located Bradshaw and plans were made for his arrest. It was obvious that the FBI was too centrally controlled; Moore had to get permission from the FBI Director's Office before he could move to arrest him. He was on hold. I had no such restrictions and offered to move with my agents before Bradshaw would disappear again. Just as we were ready to do that, Moore received clearance and we jointly planned our move. Road blocks were erected around the area of Bradshaw's hideout and as we moved towards his house he entered his car and drove off towards one of our roadblocks. As the agents went forward to arrest him, he shot himself. There was not going to be a trial.

The routine in monitoring the progress of investigations involved my briefing the 87<sup>th</sup> CID Commander each morning, who then briefed Col Shuler, who in turn would brief the XVIIIth Airborne Corps G-1, who was BG Carl Turner (much later MG Turner, Retired who ended up in jail for illegally selling weapons destined for an Army museum). Col Shuler complained to my boss that Turner would consistently ask leading questions which made him believe that Turner had advance notice of all the incidents we were investigating. I had no clue how this could happen. A few weeks later I decided to check on my duty agents late in the evening and as I approached the rear door of the Provost Marshal Office which was completely dark, I noticed two people sitting on the steps engaged in conversation; it was one of the CID agents briefing BG Turner. I reported the incident to my boss and now Col Shuler knew how he was consistently pre-empted. Apparently the side briefings stopped, since I never again confronted such an interchange nor heard about any complaints from Col Shuler.

I had three bosses during my CID assignment, one better than the next. Major Stancil was a former CID agent and he knew the ins and outs of the CID process; Major Stanislow was a hard-headed detective, he would resist the closing of unsolved cases to the bitter end; Major Higgins was a perfect gentleman, if he saw an Agent reading the paper while at work he would never fault him but rather assume that it was somehow work related – yet he demanded job dedication. I learned something from each of them. Colonel Shuler, however was a consistent problem; both he and his wife were alcoholics. At one time the Secretary of the Army, who was visiting the Post, was making a speech while Col Shuler was drinking at the Officers Club bar next door, threatening to bust into the auditorium to tell the Secretary about some undefined

problem; another Captain and I had to physically restrain Shuler to preclude an incident. At another occasion Shuler asked me to get some groceries for him since both he and his wife were ‘sick’. I spent about \$20 responding to the favor he asked, but when I delivered these to his house he referred me to his wife for reimbursement and she referred me back to him – I gave up, he still owes me \$20..... He was definitely not a role model.

While I had my challenges, Paula engaged herself in teaching elementary school children in nearby Spring Lake. One of her challenges was to learn North Carolina history, the other, how to lead a class of over 30 students without a physical break. The pay was quite modest, but we could save all of it and build up a small reserve in case of need.

Back to School – Michigan State University: Paula had a vision that we both ought to go for our respective Master Degrees and made me apply for mine within Army channels. To my amazement, I received orders to proceed to East Lansing, Michigan and be enrolled in the Police Administration Master’s Program at Michigan State University; Paula enrolled herself in the Master’s Program for Guidance and Counseling in the School of Education. When we reported into the University, the Administration noted that we were an ‘older’ couple and we were offered faculty housing, which we gladly accepted. The courses were very easy and in most of them the graduate students did their own instructions. We even arranged to take one course together in Industrial Psychology. The course started with about 100 students but when the instructor explained the course in detail, more than half dropped the course immediately. He then divided the residual students into three groups: Psychology students, Education students and Military students. Paula was with about a dozen Education students and I was with two female Army officers in the Military group. We were all challenged to develop a rating system for our respective professions, identifying applicable traits which needed to be considered to identify success. The Psychology students selected nurses and targeted a hospital for their project. Apparently, the men ended up chasing rather than rating nurses and the whole group had to drop the class. The Education group somehow was reduced to two people, Paula and a Mormon student named Darrell who had received an ‘A’ for every course since Kindergarten; they decided to select the rating of teachers. My group dwindled down to me and I was developing a rating system for Criminal Investigators. Even though Paula and I had the same last name, the instructor never realized that we were married. At the end, he thought I was the only one who had a realistic goal and I got my ‘A’, while Paula and Darrell got “B’s”; Darrell was devastated and Paula found it ironic, since she had helped me with the statistical compilations and the joint class experience had been her idea.

As my course work ended, I had maxed an ‘A’ for all of my classwork, but my thesis was still pending as we headed into a summer session. I had been allocated a full year to finish my Master’s program – but when the summer session ended I had only reached the first draft of my Thesis: ‘Law and Order in Civil Defense’. My degree was thus delayed, as I was ordered to my new assignment. Paula had successfully completed her degree and was ready to go on for a PHD, but I would not hear of that; I did not want to leave her behind in Michigan. My next assignment should have been a utilization tour after my course work and I was slated to go and teach at the MP School at Fort Gordon. We already made plans to buy the house of my friend Bruce Young from my 1<sup>st</sup> Division assignment, who was ready to move on to his next assignment. Then I got a call from my Branch in Washington, Captain Don Byer (subsequently the Alexandria Volvo car dealer and father of the later Virginia Governor) and it appeared that my assignment could change, but suddenly the phone line went dead. I was pretty frantic to find out what the call

really meant and it took about 10 minutes to restore the connection. Sure enough, I had a choice to make, take on the teaching platform for three years or accept an assignment in the Provost Marshal Office of the newly forming III Corps, at Fort Hood, Texas. I saw myself on the teaching platform for three years and with that image, I blurted out: "Don, I'll go to Texas!"

Fort Hood, Texas: I arrived at Fort Hood along with Paula and a new car and was greeted with astonishment by those who had heard that III Corps was destined to move to Berlin soonest; thus most had left their wives behind and certainly had not acquired a new car. But my ignorance was bliss; regardless of rumors, III Corps never moved. Soon after my arrival I received my promotion to the rank of Major. I was now a field-grade officer, with brass on the visor of my hat. I was also eligible for field-grade government quarters and a newly built house was assigned to me. We had temporarily moved into some very dingy rental in Killeen, Texas and were happy for the upgrade.

Paula was anxious to get back to teaching and found an opening in the on-post school. The conditions were similar to her last job at Fort Bragg, overcrowding and no breaks. She again had to take a history course, this time it was Texas history. Some months later, she saw the consolidated listing of the school staff – there was only one teacher with a Master's Degree, hers. Since she had majored in Guidance and Counseling she was asked to help-out with some problem children. At the end of her employment, when we had some indications that I might be assigned to Ethiopia, she gave her notice and was asked to be debriefed by the Superintendent of Schools; in the conversation he opined that Ethiopia was a very appropriate destination for her – a clearly anti-Semitic sentiment in the way it was structured – and that was from the Superintendent of Texas Schools.

At Fort Hood I was assigned to the Provost Marshal Office, III Corps. I was again in a tactical unit which did not have operational law and order responsibilities; those belonged to the Post Provost Marshal who was supported by an MP Battalion that also was not under our jurisdiction. In short, we really had nothing to do. We were four officers in the III Corps PM Office, Col Vail the Provost Marshal; LTC Bliss the Deputy; me, the Action Officer; and Lt Minton my assistant. Once in a while we would get a staff action which would be passed down to Lt Minton to respond; he would draft the response and give it to me, I would correct it and send it to LTC Bliss, he would want some changes and pass it back to me, I would do what was requested and it went back and up to Col Vail who would again want some changes; so it would come down again for another draft - - - it was maddening! The rest of the time we would listen to Col Vail explain about his investments. He was an avid smoker and knew that it was not healthy and therefore tried to quit; he was very short-tempered during the first two weeks but then settled down to our relief. Unfortunately just when all seemed normal again, Col Vail was asked to make a speech and back he went to smoking; we knew we were going to be unhappy for at least another two weeks after his speech. I was more than happy when I was detailed to be the MP planner on a Maneuver Planning Staff which brought me into a completely different and busy working environment.

The command apparently was short of money and air-conditioning was quite expensive. At work we were on the second floor of an old World War II barracks. Texas is a very hot State and the top floor of an old barracks was miserably hot. The uniform of III Corps was designated by the Corps Commander to include the wearing of a silk, camouflaged scarf. That scarf made life unbearable. Everyone was miserable and on one hot day I had enough, I ripped it off, thereby setting the new standard as all others did the same. We never heard another word about our lack

of scarves in the upstairs barracks. But that was not the end of the story about that hot environment. In an effort to save money, the CG III Corps cut-off all the air-conditioning to the Government furnished housing. There was a consensus that this edict had gone too far, since we forfeited our housing allowance for these quarters – in other words, we were paying for them and air-conditioning was presumably included. Someone initiated an Inspector General (IG) complaint, as well as letters were written to a number of Congressmen. After about a week without air-conditioning the units started to ‘purr’ again; the complaints had been successful.

My boss Colonel Vail was very unhappy that I was lost to his staff. He insisted that he wanted me to report to him each morning, before assuming my maneuver planning functions. He got me into his office and told me that I should do a lousy job, so that I would be fired from the Maneuver Planning Staff and returned to him for full-time duty. I declined to do that. He now went to the Chief Planner and was successful in convincing him that I was needed in the Provost Marshal office; so, each morning I had to go to my old office for about two hours before reporting to the Maneuver Planning Staff. What was aggravating, were three factors: (1) We had nothing to do on each of those mornings; all we discussed were his fund investments and his investment in orange groves; (2) I had to work another couple of hours after normal duty hours each day to finish my maneuver planning responsibilities; (3) He and his buddy and the MP Battalion Commander were alcoholics and when they drank they could become quite nasty. However, I reconciled myself to my fate and without further objections carried on.

Then one evening, in one of his alcoholic stupors, Colonel Vail came to my home and in front of another visitor in my home accused me of ‘disloyalty’ because I did not fowl-up my planning assignment and return to his office. I had enough of him and on the next morning I reported to the Corps G-1 (Personnel Officer) Colonel Lauterbach, requesting to be either relieved from the Maneuver Planning Staff or reassigned. I was immediately reassigned to the G1 Office and designated Protocol Officer for the Command; a great assignment. I arranged the itinerary of foreign and domestic visitors to the Corps and escorted them as needed. During Corps exercises I became the Headquarters Commandant in charge of placing and sustaining all the units quartered and operating in the Headquarters compound. This duty entailed some heavy responsibilities to assure that everything was well coordinated and functioning for mission accomplishment. I had one misstep in the first maneuver assigned as Headquarters Commandant. I had completed the placement of all Corps Headquarters entities and attached units within the assigned area and the Maneuver had started. My boss was happy and told me that from now on, nothing was to move along the road running straight through the maneuver area. Then I got a report that a Mapping Unit was being added with 10 vehicles and about 25 personnel. There was a small area available on the left side near the entrance and I believed that it would be adequate for a truck and the jeeps which I assumed were organic to a mapping unit. To my consternation the 10 vehicles which appeared on my entrance road were huge vans used for map storage. There was no way to turn them around. I had to herd them through the entire headquarters to the far side where there was a larger area. As the noise permeated through the command tent, my boss came out, looked at the mass of vans, looked at me, shook his head and returned into the tent. He never said another word. I guess the expression on my face was enough for him to know that I had learned a lesson.

Unannounced, one day, I received a telephone call from East Lansing, Michigan and two of my Professors were on the line. They had received the final draft of my thesis. I was asked a couple of innocuous questions and then congratulated; the short telephone call had represented my orals, which hereby were passed and my thesis was accepted and I was awarded my Master’s

Degree in Police Administration. Since the phone call was my oral examination, this courtesy phone call avoided an expensive trip to Michigan; it was indeed a noble gesture. I had to forgive Dr. Weaver for all the revisions of my thesis which I had been forced to complete. The irony of all that work was that most parts of my thesis were obsolete within weeks after its acceptance, when President Kennedy issued a revision of the Administration's guidance on Civil Defense. Shortly thereafter, another phone call was also significant. I was asked by my Branch if I was willing to be detailed for a two-year period to the Agency for Internal Development (AIDS), Department of State; without hesitation I said: "Yes" - and off we went to Washington, DC.

The International Police Academy: I reported to Mr. Mike McCann, who was the Director of the International Police Academy and I was assigned the position of Instructional Team Leader for Personnel Administration; I was required to work in civilian clothing and my Army connection was not to be highlighted. There were five of us Army officers assigned to the Academy. LTC Becicka became an advisor and assistant to the Director; LTC Norman became the Chief of Operations; Captain Gooch taught Police Operations; and Captain Bruno, a Spanish linguist, tended to the Spanish language students. When we were to teach Spanish speaking students, we were going to be supported with simultaneous translation performed by extremely competent translators.

The first class was going to be for senior, English speaking, Police Administrators from about 15 different countries, mainly from Latin America, and from the Pacific and from Africa. This was going to require some concentrated preparations of lesson plans and administrative arrangements. When we were finally ready to receive our first class and before the course was to start, in November '63, Paula and I started in our car to take a short vacation trip to New York. I had my radio on as we were leaving Washington when there came the announcement that President Kennedy had been assassinated. I immediately returned to the Academy and found myself to be the only faculty member present. I ended up in the role of accepting the condolences of the incoming students, all very much shook-up about the assassination. I suddenly had assumed the role of a diplomat and had to make sure that these foreign students appreciated that the United States government accepted their sincere expressions of regret.

After the course started, we Army officers relied on our prior experiences and suggested that we adopt student groups for counseling and invite them to our homes, so that they could return to their respective countries and tell about our private lives. It was curious that State Department personnel never seemed to have done that. Paula and I had some very fine and enlightening experiences with this initiative. Along the way we had adopted groups of Chilean, Jordanian, Egyptian, Philippines, and Pakistanis. The Pakistanis were the most difficult to get to know, they maintained their distance. The Philippine officers were very engaging and very intelligent. The Egyptians were extremely friendly and pounced on the one officer who wanted to keep his distance. The Jordanians were similarly friendly, they brought up the subject that I was Jewish and probably wanted to visit Israel; they advised us to visit Jordan first and then Israel so that we would not have any problem; later they called back and said: "It is OK if you and your wife want to visit Israel first, just call us and we will take care of everything!" The Chilean officers were our favorites; the senior member of the group, General Huerta, later became the commander of the Carabineros; his friend, General Christie had been an Olympic champion on horseback and wile in Washington, had an affair with Joanie one of Paula's girlfriends; the group had their pictures taken with Bobby Kennedy when he visited the Academy

– so did Paula! The Chileans obviously were much more affluent, which we could see when we took a field trip with them to New York City.

After about a year and a half, and upon the departure of LTC Norman, I took over his position of Chief or Operations. Then, in March '65 we adopted our newly born daughter, Laura and promptly needed to move to a bigger apartment; but we said that apart from the move, this baby would not change anything. How wrong could one be? It changed our life completely. Both Paula and I had to consider our daughter in every decision from then on; our social life had to conform to Laura's presence and requirements.

My State Department duty was a very meaningful and challenging 2 ½ year assignment. Towards the end of this tour of duty I involved myself in creating a mock Operations Center to function during civil disturbances or natural disasters. This type of facility was later copied by civilian police agencies – domestic as well as foreign. As my departure approached, I was contacted by a representative of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to see if I might be interested in organizing and heading a projected DEA Training Academy. I was tempted to pursue the job offer but my pending promotion made me think that I still had a promising career left within the Army. Before departure I was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and my next assignment would bring me back to Germany; but first to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas to attend the Command and General Staff College. Going back to school at Fort Leavenworth was a breeze. We had rented a house on the economy and Paula befriended a neighbor, who had married a Mormon and had converted to that religion; Paula learned a lot about their religious practices. The course was easy and I graduated in the top third of the class.

#### Chapter XIV: GERMANY AGAIN

A Third Tour in Germany: In the spring of 1966, I had orders to fly to Germany. We were going to take a two week vacation to see family and friends, but before we were set to leave, I received a call from the local Transportation Officer who offered me a First Class voyage on the ocean liner, the United States, if I would forego my vacation. I consulted with Paula and we agreed, particularly since it was a First Class voyage and Laurie would probably enjoy such a trip. We reported to the dock in New York City at the prescribed time and my cousin Ruth and Paula's sister Rose were there to see us off. I checked the posted manifest and I could not find my name on the First Class passenger list. Someone suggested that I check the Tourist Class list, I resisted but sure enough, there was my name. I contacted the Bursar and told him that there was a mistake, since a First Class passage was promised to me and if I did not get that, I would cancel my voyage, take my vacation and fly to Germany as originally planned. The Bursar looked at Paula in her new mink jacket and agreed that we should be in First Class; he then contacted the Transportation Officer and verified what had been promised to me. He now advised me that he had only two First Class cabins left, which were assigned to people who had problems with foreign travel certifications; if either one would fail to show, we would get the cabin, but if both showed up it had to be Tourist Class for us – however, I had to board now since the ship was about to leave. We thought it over, took a chance and agreed, said goodbye to Ruthie and Rosie, boarded - - - and we got the First Class cabin! It was a marvelous trip and certainly a worthwhile vacation. Our waiters, Eddie and Freddie had once worked for my uncle Hans who had been the maître dis at the New York Athletic Club – what a small world! When we arrived and debarked, I overheard a couple of Colonels complaining about the trip, they had

been in Tourist Class. I told Paula not to mention our upgrade since I was just a Lieutenant Colonel.

My initial assignment in 1965 was to be the Law and Order Officer, Seventh Army Support Command, at Boeblingen, near Stuttgart. It was the time when the Office of the Provost Marshal General was disestablished and subordinate commands did the same with their Provost Marshals and distributed law and order functions to the G-1, the G-3 and the G-4 staff sections. It was a terrible arrangement and I said so to my boss the G-1. He agreed to reestablish the position of Provost Marshal, as long as it remained within his shop. Since that was better than nothing, I agreed and soon was designated as the Provost Marshal, Seventh Army Support Command. In the meantime there was a command problem affecting the military police. The Seventh Army Provost Marshal, at that time BG Gustafson, had been used to providing directions to the Commander of the 15th MP Brigade, Col Gibson a unit assigned to my Seventh Army Support Command. When the Commanding General of the Support Command became knowledgeable, he ordered that all direct contacts between the PM at Seventh Army and the MP Brigade Commander be stopped. I was now in the middle and it took all my diplomatic efforts to keep everyone out of trouble and still get the job done. It was a hair-raising experience and I was happy in mid-1967 to be told that I would assume command of the 793<sup>rd</sup> MP Battalion in Fuerth, near Nurnberg, where its Commander had suddenly died.

The 793<sup>rd</sup> MP Battalion had its companies dispersed throughout the entire German State of Bavaria. This was going to be a big job. I proceeded to Fuerth a couple of days early, arriving on June 5, 1967. In the early morning of June 6, while still at the hotel, I received an urgent message to immediately take command of the Battalion, since the war in the Middle East between Israel and Arab nations had broken out and one company was to move into the combat zone. Captain Laine McCotter, my S-3 briefed me of my options and I made a lot of local Provost Marshals unhappy, who relied on the Battalion for MP manpower, when I assembled the required personnel without notice and moved them out within the prescribed deadline. In subsequent meetings with the supported Area Provost Marshals we came to an understanding that I could engage the Battalion in numerous training exercises. These included a lot of riot control training and tactical deployments; the trick was to try to assemble enough personnel for training without impinging on the law enforcement mission which was required to be performed by the supported Area Provost Marshals.

The next operational alert came in the spring of 1968. Soon after I had assumed command of the Battalion, my parent unit, the 15<sup>th</sup> Military Police Brigade had arbitrarily reassigned Captain McCotter to their headquarters, because he was such a good officer. From time to time Captain McCotter came back to Fuerth in what I had presumed to be a social effort, to keep in contact with his friends. But one day, he pulled me aside and asked to talk to me in private. We went to my office and he whipped out a large map of the German-Czechoslovakia border area and a detailed operational plan. It was a plan involving the possible move of Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia. He told me that he had argued at Brigade and had finally won approval to brief me on this classified contingency plan which he had been busily working on for the past few months. At first he had been instructed not to tell anyone in the Battalion about the plan, since it was close-hold, but it seemed ridiculous to him that the plan could not even be revealed to the Battalion Commander who had a major role in case of its implementation. In any event he was now free to brief me, but only me. I remember thinking that all this seemed like high drama about an unlikely event, but I was interested in seeing the type of work young McCotter had accomplished. The plan assumed a disturbance at the Czech border, committed the

793<sup>rd</sup> MP Battalion into action all along the border in support of VII Corps. The plan was well developed, it showed the proposed positions of my unit and while I admired McCotter's work it was soon shoved out of my mind as just another one of those contingency plans.

The following spring, I was at my favorite spot in Germany, monitoring an MP Platoon test for the Platoon stationed at Garmisch. My driver and I had arrived the night before and on the next morning I was still in bed in my room in the Patton Hotel of the Garmisch Recreation Center, when I tuned on the 0630 news. The lead story was that Russian troops had been 'invited' into Czechoslovakia, not by Alexander Dubcek, the new liberal Communist leader, but by some hardline faction under Gustav Husak, to re-establish orthodox Communist rule. Russian tanks were rolling into the country, there was shooting in the streets of Prague, a lot of confusion and Americans were evacuating the country. All I could think was: "Oh brother! – McCotter's plan!" I was out of bed and into my pants in no time and rushed to the hotel desk. "Any message for me?" "No." I called my driver and we were ready to move by 7AM. One more call to the Brigade Duty Officer in Frankfurt: "Is there any message for me?" "No, why?" – He had not heard of the Russian invasion into Czechoslovakia. I advised him that I was leaving Garmisch and that he could relay any message to me through the Munich MP Station while I was enroute. The driver was great; within a half an hour we were in contact with Munich, but no message. We stopped at an Esso Gas Station and I bought a German road map depicting the Czech border area. In the back seat of the sedan, frantically trying to remember the details of McCotter's plan, I sketched out my Battalions proposed dispositions. It wasn't easy, first of all because I was bouncing around in the back seat as we raced towards and then past Munich, but more importantly, because I had not paid that close attention to what I had then considered as an 'it won't happen' plan. But with a little artistic license, it came out 'good enough for government work'. In the meantime, every five minutes we checked back with Munich for any messages – there were none. I could not understand why VII Corps had not alerted my Battalion; the Corps' contingency plan must surely have been implemented. We were now past Munich and the MP Station was fading, and it would be at least another half an hour before I could contact Nurnberg. I decided to stick my neck out. I ordered an immediate 'practice' alert for the entire 793<sup>rd</sup> MP Battalion, an 'unscheduled' training exercise. If I was wrong about VII Corps, I might never hear the end of it; but if I was right, I would not be caught short. As Munich started to fade, my last instructions focused on platoon radio-relay locations, something we had practiced many times, these relays could place me in contact with the border and they would be essential in implementing McCotter's plan. When I was able to contact Nurnberg, there still were no messages, but the units of the Battalion were starting to move to alert locations; we were committed to action, but had no orders. I had reached my headquarters in record time, three hours from Garmisch to Fuerth through Munich rush-hour traffic and I was still in one piece – my driver deserved a medal.

It was now after 10 AM and I was at my headquarters, yet there was still no message for my Battalion. From prior VII Corps coordination on various operational plans, I knew the VII Corps Transportation Officer personally and called him at Stuttgart. His office answered; he was not there but could be contacted at another number. I called that number and he answered: "Am I glad that you are finally contacting me! We are having message traffic problems and I have been unable to contact you. Can you come to see me right now; I can't discuss this over the phone." You mean come to Stuttgart?" "No, I am in Merrill Barracks in Nurnberg." I had just passed there about a half an hour earlier. Had I read McCotter's plan more carefully, I would

have known where VII Corps Forward would be located. The VII Corps contingency plan was operational.

VII Corps Forward was well organized but the Corps was without communication with the border, this posed particular problems with the major border crossing sites. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Cavalry which normally operated all along the border had its own tactical mission and could not be used for the traffic intelligence which was presently needed. So, the first question I received as I entered their offices was if I could establish some communication with the border. "Sure, within a half hour after you give me a chopper." "No problem, you'll have a chopper in 15 minutes." I now knew they needed us.

My Battalion Operations Officer was Major Arlen Bee. That morning he had routinely kissed his wife good bye with plans for lunch; he found himself at the Czech border at lunch time. I had briefed Bee with my Esso road map, shoved him into the chopper and he was off to first brief my Company B Commander at Grafenwoehr and then proceed to the major border crossing point. Company B was to move to specified highway locations about a mile from the border from their alert locations. My radio relay between Fuerth and Grafenwoehr was operational. Within a short while I had a second relay functional with a near the border locations feeding to my jeep outside of my office, and I reported this to VII Corps. After that, we could do no wrong. Of the first 12 Intelligence Summaries published by VII Corps, the 793<sup>rd</sup> MP Battalion was the attributed source on 8 of those items.

The operation was relatively simple. The German Border Guards manned the border and screened everyone coming across. All Americans were referred to the MP's who set up their Traffic Control Posts just out of view from the border. There we assisted the evacuees as deemed appropriate. We advised them that an Evacuee Center was established in Fuerth, referred anyone requiring medical assistance to Grafenwoehr and provided transportation to some few who required such support. VII Corps issued Intelligence requirements and we asked appropriate questions of Evacuees and the Border Guards to accommodate the Essential Elements of Information (EEI) which were Intelligence requirements. In the meantime, Company A in Fuerth, assisted in setting up the Evacuation Center; Company C in Wurzburg and Company D in Munich were tasked to support Company B in Grafenwoehr, particularly with assuring continuous operations of the critical radio relays in the field, which functioned magnificently under the guidance of the NCOIC of the Battalion Communication Section. In some fashion, the entire Battalion was involved. The operation lasted about three days; everyone worked 12 hour shifts and some much longer.

The experience of the MP's on the ground proved memorable for all those involved. Those who were fortunate and found themselves near the border could tell their own 'war' stories. The range of responses from the American evacuees was particularly revealing. On one end of the spectrum, the MP's were hugged and kissed - - - so it was when our Ambassador Shirley Temple Black came across the border wearing purple, knee-high boots and kissed the MP's who received her; she sure looked good when she came into our Fuerth Evacuation Center. On the other end, there were some who spit on the MP's; clearly they had been sympathetic to the hardline Communist faction and the only question was why they were leaving Czechoslovakia. In the Evacuation Center at Fuerth there was general good comradeship and humor. These were not helpless refugees, only people inconvenienced by international events, who were now required to make unforeseen plans for transportation and resettling. Some had money or cash-flow problems, some identification/passport problems, and some just did not know what to do next. But adequate Federal representation had been assembled at Fuerth to

solve everyone's predicament, if not permanently then at least on a temporary basis. The MP's at Fuerth acted as referring agents who assured that anyone in need would be advised appropriately where to go for help. And on the political side, we could report no incursion by Russian forces or mistreatment of any Americans.

The Battalion received a laudatory letter of thanks from the Commanding General, VII Corps for a job well done. Some of my NCO's were awarded with Commendation Medals; my officers received recognition on their respective efficiency reports and at the end of my command tour, I was awarded the Legion of Merit.

In January 1969, I had completed my command tour and returned to the States awaiting orders for my next assignment - it would probably be Vietnam since the Vietnam War was still in progress. In the interim, I received an invitation from US Customs to join their organization and again another one from the Drug Enforcement Administration to organize their Training Academy. These solicitations were an outgrowth from my tour with USAID where I had made a lot of contacts. I submitted a request for retirement, since I had no guarantee that I would be promoted to Colonel after a Vietnam tour. The reply was quick, my retirement was disapproved. However my attitude remained positive - if I was really needed I had an obligation to stay in. But I was concerned that my request for retirement might doom my selection for promotion. On that basis, I decided to visit my MP Branch in Washington and made an appointment to see the Branch Chief, Colonel Wittwer. When I entered he seemed to be immediately on the defensive, I guess he thought that I came to fight against the denial of my request for retirement. I assured him that this was not my intention; rather it was my concern about its impact on a possible promotion. He assured me that this was not going to be a problem. What I did not know was that he would soon be my boss in Vietnam after his promotion to Brigadier General.

#### Chapter XV: VIETNAM

Headquarters US Army Vietnam (USARV): My orders, of course, were to Vietnam. On leave, I took Paula to Long Beach, Long Island, New York where we rented a house and I was off for a 12 month separation tour. I arrived in Vietnam on the 18th of February 1969 and, by the way, I left Vietnam on the 18th of February 1970 – I did not get a single drop day. However, my best week in Vietnam was my one week of Rest and Recuperation (R&R), when I met Paula and Laurie in Honolulu at the Ilikai Hotel. We hardly left the hotel since it had everything one could wish for during a week of rest. Jack Benny was one of the residents there and we sat at a table right next to him. But the week was short and I was soon back to the grind in-country. From there, I stayed in touch with cassettes, reading fairy tales to Laurie and greetings to Paula.

When I first arrived in Vietnam I did not have an assignment. And worse yet, I could not get a BOQ room, everything was taken. I felt like they sure did not need me and why am I here? I was to remain in the replacement billets. Finally LTC Holloway took pity on me; he had a large billet with two beds and he gave me one to sleep on until I could get my own BOQ room assigned. I had contemplated pitching a tent on the parade grounds in front of USARV Headquarters to dramatize my plight. The problem was that many who had been assigned to USARV Headquarters and after six month were reassigned to another job somewhere else in-country, failed to turn in their key and kept the room in case they returned or for some others who might have to visit USARV. No one in charge ever bothered to check this out. After a couple of weeks or so, I found out that LTC Irving, also an MP, had such a room; he was now assigned to the Americal Division up north and when I contacted him he reluctantly said I could

use the room, but when one of his Lieutenant had to visit USARV I had to vacate. Once I had possession, he would have a big problem getting me to move out for a visiting Lieutenant and I finally got the key.

On the assignment side, it appeared that BG Brandenburg, the PM USARV and Commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> MP Brigade had not been apprised, of my arrival. As soon as he heard that I was in country, he sent a sedan to fetch me and briefed me on my assignment. I was to be the Chief of Operations, Provost Marshal Office, US Army Vietnam (USARV), which was located in a large Headquarters building in Long Binh, a US built, military base city. To assure that I understood what was involved, he asked me to get into a helicopter for one week and fly around the country, visiting every major unit; thereafter I was to stay in USARV Headquarters for the rest of my Vietnam tour – no other 6 month assignment and no command tour. The helicopter tour was quite an experience. As we were landing in an outpost in one Division area, there just had been a significant fire fight and the local ammunition dump had been blown up by the VC and was continuing to explode. The perimeter fence had dead VC soldiers entangled; it could not have been staged more dramatically. It was obvious that the soldiers in outlying areas had a difficult security problem. I took notes which came handy later on.

The routine of my assignment was soon established. Compared to the fate of the soldiers in the field, I was living the life of luxury. While most were suffering from the raw heat in Vietnam, I rotated from my air conditioned billet (I had bought a large air conditioner from a departing officer which sometimes blew the fuses in the BOQ since it was really too large for the available electrical circuit), in my air conditioned sedan, to the air conditioned mess hall, to the air conditioned office and back to the air conditioned billet. But the work was concentrated and we all pulled 12 hour duty shifts. There was always some crisis somewhere in-country which had to be addressed; orders had to be issued and information had to be disseminated. I had help from some junior officers and a number of very fine non-commissioned officers who were all very dedicated in their jobs. Since one day was just like the next, LTC Berger, who was my counterpart (the S-3) at the Brigade, arranged a noon-time get-together every Sunday for a drink at the Club – a Bloody Mary; that took the place of my half-hour daily rest on a cot, outside in the sunshine, on all other days. It was my way to relax.

Soon after I returned from my helicopter trip I was, invited by one of the officers to accompany him to a Chinese restaurant, on base. At a table nearby was a small group of officers with an Asian man; it was explained to me that he was the tailor who had a contract with the PX and those officers were probably arranging for a hand-made suit at a very low price; it was recommended that I should do the same thing just before I was to depart. While I took advantage of eating in the Chinese restaurant on a regular basis, a future arrangement with the tailor was not to be. It turned out that the little tailor was subsequently arrested as a VC agent. BG Gustafson, the prior USARV Provost Marshal, had brought him into the compound and the subsequent CID investigation got him as well as BG Brandenburg into trouble. I felt sorry about this problem for my boss, BG Brandenburg, since he just inherited the PX arrangement and had no reason to question it. The investigation continued after I completed my tour and I was contacted by CID, dispatched by Col Tufts, the CID Commander who was out to get Brandenburg and make a name for himself with his boss, the then Secretary of the Army; but more of that later. In any event, I had only laudatory comments for BG Brandenberg which the CID agents did not want to hear. BG Brandenburg would subsequently not receive a promotion and would not get another MP area assignment; a grave injustice for a great officer! It was soon after the VC tailor was arrested that BG Brandenberg left and BG Wittwer arrived. There was not much of a ceremony. I was

told that it contrasted starkly with a prior one, when BG Gustafson turned over command to BG Brandenburg and in the background the prison at Long Binh was burning, set fire by rioting prisoners. No such drama in this event. There was also not much difference in the way we proceeded. We continued with meetings between Brigade, CID and the Provost Marshal Office to assure that we were all well-coordinated.

It was soon after I had assumed my job in Long Binh that the large compound was attacked by the VC. We were alerted about incoming rocket fire and proceeded into our protective bunkers. I was sitting in the middle of the bunker when one rocket hit right at the entrance door. A Captain who was seated next to the entrance was fatally hit and others were wounded. That was a close call. Later that day, Col Keith Monroe, my immediate boss, asked us to accompany him to the roof of the Headquarters building. From there we had a clear view of a battle that was taking place below us, just outside of the perimeter of the base. The attacking VC Company had been surrounded and our tanks were firing, with Infantry closing in on the enemy unit. It was like a combat demonstration at Fort Benning – unbelievable! Then, there was a ‘zing’, a bullet whizzed by us and we got off the roof as quickly as possible.

About a month before I was scheduled to leave, I received notice that I was on the list for promotion to Colonel. The promotion was still months away, but now I was immediately eligible to move into Colonel Quarters, which were nice trailers, far better than those small BOQ rooms. Since it was for only one month, I declined. The next day, Sergeant Hollinghurst, my NCOIC had an envelope for me which indicated that there was a picture of my assigned trailer. I opened it up and it was a picture of a bombed out trailer with a Colonel’s eagle and my name prominently displayed at its entrance; anything to break the routine and have a little laugh.

After receiving the award of a Bronze Star, I saw that my next orders would bring me back again to Germany; three successive overseas tours. I said good-bye to my staff. The trip home was uneventful and I was elated to see Paula and Laurie upon my arrival. Paula had had some problems with our landlord who had made himself a pest and took an unwelcome interest in her. Since she had rejected him, he wanted to get even and arranged for an eviction notice. No problem; we were more than happy to accommodate and took off on a two-week vacation to Florida before arranging our trip to overseas.

#### Chapter XVI: A FINAL OVERSEAS TOUR IN GERMANY

Heidelberg: After arriving in Germany, at Frankfurt-Main airport, we proceeded to Heidelberg. I signed in and was asked if I would be willing to live on the economy, while I was placed on the list for Colonel’s quarters. I agreed and was furnished a two-bedroom apartment in Kirchheim, a small town at the outskirts of Heidelberg. Living on the economy had certain quirks attached. We soon got to know the people who lived below us; there were three generations of women. There was a young girl about Laura’s age and they soon became friends and developed a special language – a cross between German and English, plus their imagination. Her mother was an actress in the Theater and a bit of a hypochondriac; she was pleasant but always needy. The grandmother was a strict German and we were soon told that Laura could not run up and down the stairs after lunch since that was a rest hour. We also received good advice to lock our garbage can since the can was small and pick-up only occurred once a week and people could throw their garbage into ours. I did not lock the can, but since it was too small for our weekly garbage, I was in the habit of bringing much of our garbage in the trunk of the car to the dumpster where I worked. Once I offered a General a lift to the airport and he was surprised to

see all that garbage in the trunk of my car, as he tried to place his suitcase there; I was much embarrassed and had to suffer through a series of jokes from witnesses who saw that ‘transaction’.

Upon arrival at USAREUR Headquarters in Campbell Barracks, I took command of the 42<sup>nd</sup> MP Group (Customs) and was simultaneously dual-hatted as Customs Advisor to the European Command, with German Customs contacts in Bonn. Soon after my arrival, I was promoted to the rank of Colonel. My unit was spread out all over Germany. Initially I had only a German Customs function to assure that US troops would not violate German Customs law. As I took command, I had a meeting with the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Commander, Colonel Baxter Bullock, to discuss if the unit was still needed or if these customs duties could be carried out as an additional mission by regular Military Police units. Initially it seemed that he had a point, but upon further study I realized that there was a void which my unit could cover. Aside from investigating black-market activities in violation of German Customs laws, which we were obligated to do under the existing Status of Forces Agreement, and to bring US violators forward for prosecution, there was also an American oriented customs problem involving drugs. Drugs were coming across the border into Germany, some by members of the US Force. The problem was not just marihuana but lately there was evidence that also heroin was being imported. I saw a need to expand the unit’s function and convinced the Brigade Commander to back me up, as we briefed BG Moore, the USAEUR Provost Marshal.

A few months later, my unit headquarters was moved into the Heidelberg Shopping Center. While I was the commander of the 42<sup>nd</sup> MP Group, as well as the Customs Chief for the European Command, I was now also tasked as the Installation Commander of the Shopping Center compound. Aside from my unit, the compound encompassed two large entities, the Commissary and the Vehicle Registration operation for USAREUR. The additional job of Installation Commander was usually relegated to an after-thought, but in 1971 the US Army was attacked by the Baader-Meinhof gang and all installations were placed on alert. Car bombs had been used and I immediately posted gate guards at the entrance. I watched the entry checking procedure and was not satisfied with its thoroughness. I assumed the gate guard duty personally and thereby provided on-the-job training for the MP guards. It must have seemed strange for a Colonel checking all incoming personnel, but after a day or so, I was satisfied that the MP’s were performing this task correctly with mirrors on sticks checking the undercarriages of the vehicles, hoods and trunks opened and every person identified for authorized access. I then was able to return to my primary duties; luckily we had no incidents.

The drug traffic was coming in over the Dutch border and I set up a surveillance program in Amsterdam. My civilian-clothed agents would travel to Holland, unarmed; observe US licensed vehicles parked in the drug districts of Amsterdam. The license plates of those vehicles would be forwarded to my agents at the border and in coordination with German Customs, the vehicle and passengers would be checked for drugs as they crossed the border into the FRG. If drugs were found, we would take custody of US military offenders. The findings of this ongoing operation were reported to the Commanding General USAREUR by the USAREUR Provost Marshal. The Commanding General was concerned that this constituted a threat to the US Force and decided to take the matter up with high-level Dutch authorities; I was invited to accompany him on his personal train for a trip to The Hague, Holland. At the end of a high-level conference, my recommendation to set up an International Working Group on illegal drugs was accepted by all parties; as far as I know, this international organization is still active to this day.

After setting up a field office in Holland, I examined if other areas needed customs operations. It soon became obvious that there were two more voids. Somehow, as the customs operation was established in the American Occupation Zone, Berlin was excluded. I saw no difference between activities in the Zone and in the Berlin American Sector; I therefore opened a field office in Berlin. Additionally, our forces stationed in Italy were equally in need of customs support; I travelled to Camp Darby near Livorno and opened a field office there. With the support of the Commanding General, I had no problems in enlarging the staffing of my unit to place personnel into the new field offices.

In any assignment one can get into trouble, in this one I was involved in three incidents. In the first one, it was my bright idea that we should check out every border crossing point serving the American Zone; I made this a simultaneous field operation. My agents were instructed to proceed to the German border guard at each location, introduce themselves and ask if American soldiers use the crossing, how often, and if any drug trafficking was noted. It seemed like this operation did not require any permission from higher headquarters. I sure was wrong. To my surprise, there were some crossings where the German Custom guards was placed across the border and was no longer on German soil; the State Department received objections from Holland that US armed military personnel had violated their border. I was told in a very stern fashion that my operation had violated international law and had to cease immediately. I was lucky that the matter was dropped after my apologies were forwarded to the affected foreign ministry. The second incident involved ice cream. To make money for our youth program, the Adjutant General (AG) of the command held a Carnival each year where ice cream was sold. As long as this was done with ice cream cones consumed on the premises, no one complained. But to make more money someone decided to sell quart containers; the Germans loved our ice cream and the business was brisk. The next day I had a complaint from German Customs that such a sale violated German Customs Law. I went to the AG and asked him to stop such sales; but no luck. The sales continued on the next day and the Germans escalated their complaint into diplomatic channels – only my name was mentioned. I was called into the Chief of Staff, USAREUR's office and had to explain what had occurred. I was cautioned that in the future I needed to avoid personal courtesies and report such incidents to his office. Not much later, the third incident happened. The PX had the mission to repair automobiles for military members; often parts were needed and that posed a lengthy delay to import those parts. The AG had a courier service and soon some bright officers asked the AG to have the parts they needed to be brought in via courier, which thereby violated German Custom Laws. I found out about this practice when this operation became better known. Before I could take action, the Chief of Staff had also been apprised and I was again on his carpet. This time, his reprimand was issued in writing. I objected, since I had never been consulted when the operation was initiated and furthermore, it was not in my realm but under the auspices of the AG – the reprimand was subsequently withdrawn, but I really had to watch my back.

My new office in Italy mandated several trips to Camp Darby and when I realized the beautiful beach and facilities at that installation and at the Golf Hotel in nearby Tirania, I decided to make my next trip in conjunction with a vacation. Paula and Laurie loved it there. On a number of occasions we decided that such a vacation trip should also encompass a trip to Rome. But each time, the weather was so great and the beach so tempting, we never got to Rome. I thought that I probably carried a record of an American who traveled over a dozen times to Italy, but never visited Rome. On one occasion, we decided to go shopping in Florence and left Laurie with my friend from Vietnam, Major Fouratt, the Provost Marshal at Camp Darby. Paula found

some jewelry at the Ponte Veccio and as we prepared to return to Tirania, I realized that I needed to gas up the car. When we got to a gas station we were advised that all gas stations were on strike – no gas and without gas no return trip. I frantically called Major Fouratt and he luckily knew a store owner in Florence who always kept extra gasoline at hand because of these frequent strikes. After a couple of phone calls, I got the gas and could return to retrieve Laurie. It is always good to have friends around the world. On another occasion, when I inspected my field office in Vicenza, the NCOIC arranged for me to invite US counterpart personnel at an Italian Restaurant. To his great embarrassment the restaurant had run out of food and offered us smelt “which tasted like lobster!” as the restaurant owner explained. When the bill arrived for me, the cost was so excessive that we jokingly started to take the pictures off the wall. We finally received some decent deserts. One thing about Italy, the people there might cheat you, but you can never get angry at them – it is all a game. Some weeks later I received a letter of apology from the NCOIC, and enclosed was a check from the restaurant owner for half of the amount that I had paid.

Sometime during my tour, a great change took place with the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) which was under the direct supervision of Brigadier General Moore, the USAREUR Provost Marshal. A stove-type command was formed with all CID personnel controlled from Washington with Colonel Tufts as the commander, reporting directly to the Secretary of the Army. The change-over was not smooth however. Unannounced, during the night, a small group of agents, along with a Colonel Glazer, an Infantry Officer, who had been appointed as Col Tuft's Deputy, arrived in the command, took over the Evidence Room of the CID Headquarters in Heidelberg and placed 40 CID agents under investigation for alleged misconduct. General Moore was outraged and so was the CINC USAREUR, but the Secretary of the Army in Washington was calling the shots. Col Tufts had convinced him that the entire CID operation in USAREU was corrupt. As chance would have it, one CID Agent, Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) Lindquist was assigned to my command to investigate property disposal irregularities. He too was included in the group of agents placed under investigation. It was alleged that he had been on TDY on a certain date in Augsburg, had been paid for being on TDY, but there was evidence that he had signed for cigarettes in his home station at Heidelberg on that specific date. He reported to me and explained that this was a spurious charge since he had spent two nights in Augsburg and he could get evidence of this by taking leave and going to Augsburg. I was willing to place him on TDY for this task, but he declined the TDY option and only wanted to take leave. I granted the leave and two days later he came back with certified copies of the bills he had paid for the hotel rooms. I took the evidence with me to see the Finance Officer for an explanation on the discrepancies in the dates involved. Within ten minutes he returned and explained that the dates used by the CID investigators did not pertain to the TDY but rather were the date used by the Finance Office when they processed the TDY voucher – what a terrible mistake. It was obvious to me, that others in the CID Detachment were similarly mishandled, but we could no longer secure any information on them since they were now commanded under direct Washington control. I, however, was able to show the Provost Marshal what had happened and cleared CWO Lindquest of any charges. I could never forgive Colonel Tufts for this gross negligence of placing agents, destined for his command, under immediate investigation without first establishing that a real crime had been committed.

Sometime in the middle of my assignment, I was offered a house in the military housing area in Heidelberg. These were top flight quarters. The rear of my house faced the Autobahn and we were afraid that the noise of the cars might bother us, but we soon became used to it and the

noise was not noticed; except, it was noticed rather dramatically on one occasion. The Germans had a shortage of gasoline and to control that, they decided to declare a driving holiday. On a Sunday, no one, with the exception of emergency vehicles, was allowed to drive a car. I woke up that Sunday morning and there was this strange silence; it was eerie. There were no vehicles on the Autobahn, but the silence had become noticeable!

Right across the street from us, were the quarters of Col Lou Klekas, the Deputy PM USAREUR, my boss. We had a very fine relationship with his family which consisted of his wife Helen, three boys and two girls. His youngest girl ended up baby-sitting with Laurie. In 1973, Col Klekas was scheduled to retire and I was slated to take his place. His wife Helen thought that they should take the opportunity and visit Greece once more before they left Europe. Lou Klekas had different ideas, he thought they needed to save money and a trip to Greece was too expensive. Helen decided to go by herself and departed; then the oldest daughter Stephanie thought that her mother should not be alone in Greece and she departed. The twin boys had never been to Greece and thought this was their one-time opportunity and they departed; lastly the oldest boy and the youngest daughter did not want to be left out and they departed. Lou did not want to be home alone, he gave up and he too took off for Greece. There were all kind of ‘war’ stories upon their return, but the best one was from Helen who had seen a picture she liked in a store, yet she had no money to buy it. However, she went in, got to talk to the lady proprietor, talked about the old times in Greece, about their deceased mothers, they started to cry together, consoled each other and Helen ended up getting the picture as a present. The Klekas clan departed, for their retirement in Utah pretty well broke, but happy and we bid them a hearty fare well.

During my last year as 42<sup>nd</sup> MP Group Commander I was contacted by US Customs and asked if the unit can perform pre-embarkation Customs Inspections for soldiers returning to the States. I was willing and the command agreed. The unit was again enlarged and I assumed that US Customs task in all of my locations to include Italy, Holland and Berlin.

When I completed my tour as Customs Chief, I was awarded the “Grosse Verdienst Kreuz” a significant German award, equivalent to our Legion of Merit. This was indeed ironic – however, the Germans never knew this: 36 years earlier I had escaped from Germany and the German government had revoked my German citizenship, but now I received this very high award from the German government. That’s life!

My Last Assignment in Germany: After I relinquished my 42<sup>nd</sup> MP Group (Customs) command, I assumed the position of Deputy Provost Marshal USAREUR, another very demanding assignment. My boss was Brigadier General Wittwer. We got along very well and my assignment would have been easy, but General Wittwer sustained a back injury and was hospitalized. That placed me in charge; I was now the acting PM USAREUR. The timing was such that the Secretary of the Army, Bo Calloway, whom I knew when we were both Lieutenants at the Ground General School at Fort Riley, in 1949, had come to USAREUR to review the IG inspection report which included the negative comments about the Provost Marshal operation. I was the only Colonel in the conference and did not have a speaking part. Luckily, when we had the buffet meal, somehow Mr. Calloway and I found ourselves side by side and he turned to me and asked: “Frank, how are you guys and CID getting along?” I answered: “I am glad you asked!” I then told him about the lack of coordination and that we now find our military police chiefs without investigators. He took note of my comment and indicated that he may have to re-examine the current arrangement after a little longer trial period. We never did get that problem

completely resolved, but there were efforts made to provide adequate number of Military Police Investigators to Provost Marshals to investigate the minor cases; felony type offenses still had to be referred to the CID. After Tufts retirement, a year or so later, MG Escola and still later MG Timmerberg who became CID Commanders successively, insisted on better coordination. Many years later, when we re-instituted the Office of the Provost Marshal General in the Pentagon, the PMG was dual-hatted as CID Commander; that finally solved the coordination problem.

My tenure as the Acting USAREUR Provost Marshal was relatively brief. My former class-mate from the MP School, then, BG Timmerberg took over as Provost Marshal and we formed a good team. One of the big jobs we inherited was the need to thin down on manpower. No one enjoys doing that, but this was a requirement for all of USAREUR. We sent the requirement to Col Heragonis who was the 15<sup>th</sup> MP Brigade Commander. He met the suspense date with a proposal to increase the Brigade. There was not much time left for the response, so Paul Timmerberg and I sat down and unilaterally designed a reduced Brigade; so much for help from the affected unit. At another time, I again took leave to Italy but this time it was without any work assignment. Paula, Laurie and I went back to Firenze, to Pisa and to Livorno; again we did not get to Rome but rather, again the beach at Camp Darby. There I noticed an Italian newspaper and on the front cover it showed my office in Campbell Barracks in Heidelberg, which had been blown up by an obvious terror attack by the Baader-Mainhof group. I called General Timmerberg and sure enough, the office had been hit but it was repairable; however a Captain in an office nearby had been killed in the blast. We immediately returned to Heidelberg.

A few months later I was contacted by Colonel Getz, the MP Branch Chief in Washington about my next assignment. He indicated that Col Tufts had asked for me, apparently he said that I was among the few MP Officers who had not been involved in any misconduct and therefore eligible to be assigned to CID. My reply was that I was insulted by that remark and that I would retire rather than work for Tufts. Colonel Getz then indicated that he had another job in mind for me, that I should take over his job and become the Branch Chief for the MP Corps. I flew to the States to look for housing in the Washington area in advance of my next assignment. I stayed with my old friend George Strauss who I had known since College ROTC and who had been a witness at my wedding. He and his wife Hilda had a nice house in Arlington and a realtor lived right next door. We all went house hunting and I fell in love with a house near the Washington Mansion in the Mount Vernon District of Fairfax County, with an Alexandria address. It had a swimming pool! I signed the contract. Later that evening I got a frantic call from Paula asking me not to sign any contract for a house – but it was too late. When we returned to the States in June 1974, Paula was not happy with the house at all. A lesson learned: Never, never buy a house without your wife's concurrence!

## Chapter XVII: LAST ASSIGNMENTS

Military Police Branch Chief: My stateside assignment brought me to Washington DC, as Military Police Branch Chief (Personnel Chief). My office was in the Hoffman Building not too far from the house which I had bought, about a 20 minute ride. Parking was a problem. I had to buy a parking pass and had to park in the right area, otherwise, there was constant towing. It was pitiful at times, looking down from my office and seeing some lady running behind a wrecker trying to catch his attention, as her car was blithely towed away; there was no pity! And someone was making lots of money.

On the basis of my house-buying fiasco, Paula became a Realtor. She took and passed the Realtor Examination and went to work for Mount Vernon Realty. While we did not need the money, it was something to do and all of her earnings could go into her retirement account. Laura went to school in the local Woodley Hills Elementary School and when she got into the fifth grade she had a weird teacher who only seemed to mark on English grammar and punctuation, never on content. Even the school's principal had reservations about her and moved her child out of her class. We discussed doing the same, but I somehow came to the conclusion that Laura will face difficult people in her life and this might be the right learning experience for her. It wasn't and I had made a big mistake. Before fifth grade she always loved school; thereafter she was completely turned off and hated school and I had problems getting her through High School to graduation. Another High School aggravation was the school's policy to have a designated 'smoking area' on the outside on school property, where students were allowed to smoke. I always suspected that this was done so that the teachers, who were smokers, would also be allocated an area where they could smoke. Of course the student smoking area attracted mostly those students who had no incentive to be students and thus escalated disciplinary problems. Naturally, Laura was drawn to that crowd.

One of my first jobs as Branch Chief was to integrate women into the Military Police Corps. Their first assignments were critical to assure that the process will be successful. It ended up as a very smooth operation and there were no crises to be dealt with. Years later I was stopped on a number of occasions by female MP Officers who expressed their appreciation; I always felt good about that.

I also made numerous trips around the country to assure that our MP Corps was properly staffed and that personnel understood their career potentials. I made short speeches in which I told our officers that their chances of making General were extremely remote. We had lost most of ours in retirements and it seemed that there were no replacements coming from our branch. My talks appeared to be well received since, for some, this was their first uncoated advice for their future.

The Military Police is a combat support service, therefore, I felt that it was my job to meet the combat branch officers in their offices, rather than request them to come to me, whenever coordination was required. This made it difficult for my boss to find me in my office; I guess he thought I was goofing off. But I really made him mad when I unilaterally wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Army, my former classmate, Bo Calloway. The MP Corps was perhaps a little larger than the Adjutant General Corps, which had about 12 General Officers selected from its ranks; we were now down to only one. I knew that there was no great hope to get relief within the chain of command since no branch, particularly no combat arm branch, would be willing to transfer any General Officer slots or relinquish quotas for promotion; thus my letter to the Secretary. I received a quick response, in which he acknowledged that there was a problem, although he did not promise a specific resolution. However within a couple of years thereafter, we had a total of 8 General Officers selected from the Colonels of the MP Corps. Some of the Generals who were thus promoted never forgot my letter. Of course, I thought that I could impact, since I and everyone else knew that I personally was well beyond the age cut-off for consideration for promotion and that my intercession was not for personal gain.

At one point in my one year tenure as Branch Chief, I was contacted by my Warrant Officer Assignment Officer, CWO Darkus that he had a call from a Warrant Officer assigned to the Recruiting Command in Chicago and that we will probably receive a request from Col Tufts, the Commander of the CID Command, to reassign him. Apparently there was an ongoing

investigation by the Department of the Army Inspector General involving the interface of CID and the Recruiting Command which targeted Col Tufts. The Warrant Officer indicated that if he has a chance to speak to the IG, the request for his transfer will become mute. I was going to notify someone I could trust within the Military Police hierarchy, but there was no one; BG Wittwer who I trusted was not available. I told CWO Darkus to keep a running written record about what was happening. We received a series of reports from the Warrant Officer indicating that the evidence room of the CID Detachment at Chicago had been seized by the Washington Field Office, but the Warrant Officer indicated that he had kept a copy of all applicable statements and he was still trying to see the IG. In a final call, the Warrant Officer explained that he had seen the IG and we will receive a call from the CID Command cancelling the request for his reassignment; that happened within the hour and additionally we were advised that Col Tufts had submitted a request for retirement. I never did find out the details about the IG investigation, however, COL Tufts was reassigned to the Army History Department pending completion of the investigation and about three month later, we were apprised that his request for retirement was approved.

About a year after my arrival there was a reorganization in the Personnel Directorate and I was thereby the last Branch Chief with the rank of Colonel. Various branches were bundled together, with LTC's in charge of each branch and a Colonel in charge of three or four branches; it all was designed to save personnel and money. My boss, a Brigadier General had designed the reorganization and now that it was to be implemented, he moved on with a promotion to Major General – some other BG would have the headache of making it work. I was not slated to stay and help. Rather happily I was reassigned to the Military District of Washington at Fort McNair.

#### Provost Marshal, Military District of Washington

I was transferred to become the Provost Marshal, Military District of Washington with the added designation of Assistant Chief of Staff, Police, Security and Intelligence (ACSPSI). My office was at Fort McNair, but for my added duty of supervising the conduct of issuing Security Clearances, I had a second office in the Pentagon. I was lucky that I did not have to use the second office very often, since the ladies who were employed there and who conducted the standardized procedures leading to security clearances were very professional and there was never even one incident where the process was mishandled in any manner. Equally less demanding were my Intelligence duties. My Deputy was from the Intelligence Branch and he was able to manage just about everything within his realm of expertise. Law and Order policies and operational duties were in the forefront of my daily requirements.

The high point of my tenure as ACSPSI was my assignment to the Presidential Inauguration Staff, in advance of the pending transition of the US Presidency, which was headquartered in two old World War II barracks at the perimeter of Fort McNair. That became my third office. It was my function to plan for the military supplement to the Washington District Police and the Secret Service. Military personnel were to be stationed all along the parade route and we would have a reserve unit standing by at Fort McNair in case of a problem. Everything went well, even when the newly inaugurated President Carter unexpectedly exited his vehicle and started walking down Pennsylvania Avenue, although every security element held their breath. After the parade, Paula and I were invited to a White House reception and the Provost Marshal General received a letter of appreciation from the President's personal staff.

A year later, the Commanding General wanted a reorganization of his staff. Since the DCSPSI operational functions were paramount, he wanted to combine this with the Command's G-3 (Operations) function. This meant that I was the G-3 as well as the DCSPSI which the incumbents in the G-3 shop utterly resented. But it was the CG's idea and that was what governed.

My immediate boss was the Chief of Staff, Col Smithers. As the year 1977 ended, he was planning to retire. His replacement came into the command and unexpectedly also retired; this created a critical void. By then I was the highest ranking Colonel in the command and the Commanding General asked me to become his Chief of Staff; I accepted the job.

Chief of Staff, Military District of Washington: During my last year at the Military District of Washington, I became the Chief of Staff of the command. The hours of work were strenuous, from 7 AM till 6 PM in the office and an in-basket to take home, since paperwork during operating hours was almost impossible to accomplish. The Commanding General, Military District of Washington was MG Dohleman. He was very strict but definitely, also very fair. With his strictness, my job as his Deputy on the staff side, my job was to be the nice guy and explain the reasoning for his strict dictates. On occasion I would go back to the CG to appeal some decision; more often I lost out, but when I had a very good point to make, he listened and would reverse himself – I thought that we were a pretty good team. I am still in correspondence with him and was very sad to hear when he lost his very personable wife.

I did loose on a number of important issues; that is, issues which I thought were important. One of my more memorable engagements concerned the problem of Vehicle Registration. Vehicles were registered with MDW stickers to facilitate entry into the military posts of the command. I could not secure a consensus within the MDW staff. My idea was to continue the current process without change, while others wanted to extend the period between re-registration requirements. I needed a decision from the Commanding General. In accordance with governing procedures, I set up a briefing, providing three alternatives: Alternative A – my recommendation; Alternative B – lengthened enrollment periods; Alternative C – eliminate registration. I thought I had given a very convincing argument, but so did my opponent. It was up to the CG to decide A or B. His decision: C - - - C? I had never even considered it, but here it was, we ceased registering vehicles.

Another issue concerned the retirement of the Comptroller. The CG did not hold this officer in very high regard. The officer wanted to retire and he had many days of saved-up leave. He wanted to leave the command about two months ahead of his retirement date, stay on leave during that period and assume his new job immediately; it meant that he would be working in his new job while still on leave, i.e. on active duty. The General would not accept this plan; if he wanted to start work early, he would have to retire earlier, even though it meant a significant difference in his retired pay, as he was straddling one of the longevity increases. I tried to intervene on behalf of the officer; it was an action that was tolerated in many instances, but not in this case. The officer had to retire early with reduced retired pay.

As Chief of Staff I had to carry a beeper, in case of any emergency – I was on duty 24 hours a day. I received very few alerts from the office, most of my beeper calls were from Laura who had many more urgent requirements than the entire MDW command. Along the way I discovered that my blood pressure had crept up into an unacceptable realm and I was placed on blood pressure as well as cholesterol medication; this was a 'for life' arrangement. I also knew

that this job was eventually going to kill me and retirement had to be an early target. I submitted my request for retirement; I was 53 years old.

My last task was to complete the fiscal year for the command within the allocated budget. This was a ticklish operation. The command wanted to use up all of the allocated money and had a list for last minute acquisitions. On the other hand, if the command spends money in excess of its Congressional authorization, that could become a criminal offense. And it all came back to me as the last minute decider. It was touch and go to make last minute decisions, as the fiscal year ended on 30 September 1978. It all ended up very well. We spent what we could and did not violate the law; I was happy, the staff was happy and the CG was happy – and he was the one who counted. Two weeks later he organized a retirement parade for me and I invited a number of my friends like Paul and George to help celebrate at a party which I sponsored at the Fort McNair Officers Club, following the parade. I received my second Legion of Merit for my Army service and as well as my Retirement Certificate. On 1 November 1978 I was officially retired and I was now ready to get on with a new civilian job as an Army Retiree.

## Chapter XVIII: CIVILIAN LIFE OF AN ARMY RETIREE

The University of Maryland: After a whole weekend off, I stepped into my first meaningful civilian occupation. I was hired as Assistant Director Resident Life, working for Dr. Richard Stimpson, the Director and charged with creating a Human Resources Program for the Department. I hired staff and coordinated the implementation of an operational plan to assume this function. No sooner had we gotten organized, the Department ran out of money and the Human Resources operation had to close down. I was then asked to take over the managerial function of renovating the dormitories on the campus. I explained that I had no engineering or architectural experience, but that was not the issue; there were plenty of engineers and architects who could work for me. That was indeed ironic, remembering my disastrous summer session majoring in Engineering, at CCNY in 1943. Here, the planned renovations had not gotten off first base after three years of groping. They needed a manager. I accepted the position and we got organized. We came up with the first Design-Build project in the State of Maryland. Design-Build projects need a lot of Change Orders because final plans came only into fruition as we went along and many options could not be pre-determined. The State had a provision that any change order in excess of \$50,000 needed State-level approval. That meant that I had to keep my Change Orders below \$50,000 or there would be an extensive delay; in a way we violated the spirit of the law, but it worked; we had a lot of \$49,000 or so Change Orders. Our renovations were phased and we learned improvements from one phase to the next. When I left my position, I had developed an effective standardized procedure and my staff had no problems carrying on without me. Near the end of 1992, I became the Director of Graduate Housing, with the mission of phasing out University involvement in providing housing for graduate students and to transition this operation to a private contractual arrangement. That too worked out fine. I retired from the University with 14 years of service, in 1993.

Retired, Retired: I was now Retired from the Army and Retired from the University of Maryland and thereby had earned three of retired pays: an Army retirement, a Maryland State retirement and Social Security. Paula was still working as a Realtor – I was again in an enviable

position. I involved myself in volunteer work. And when she finally retired, our fourth retired pay was her Social Security. In any event, no more paid work, only volunteer jobs:

I had started to coach soccer before my Army retirement, when Laura was in the seventh grade; I kept coaching as she progressed into High School, and continued to coach High School girls for some more years after she graduated.

I became the President of the Mount Vernon Manor Citizen Association where I lived and then progressed to the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations as the Public Safety Committee Chair, as one of three Co-Chair of the Council for a couple of years and later as Transportation Committee Chair. Eventually I was appointed by the Mount Vernon District Supervisor as the Transportation Commissioner for the Mount Vernon District.

When we arrived in Virginia, I joined the Jewish Congregation at the Fort Belvoir Chapel. Soon I became the Chair of the Brotherhood. Later both Brotherhood and Sisterhood were joined into the Jewish Congregation Council. I also became the chair of that organization until my term expired and I remained as Ex Officio member.

On the military side, I joined the MDW Retiree Council as it was formed immediately after my Army retirement. That Council later became the Fort Myer Retiree Council which I chaired for three different two-year tours; I also chaired its Medical Committee. I have remained on the Council as Ex-Officio member.

For the retired Military Police, I computerized the MP Officers Retiree Roster and the MP Deceased Roster, both of which I then administered for many years. This project was part of a greater effort to assure that the retired Military Police officers would not lose touch with one another. Towards that end we wanted to develop a periodic publication which we called the MPO Digest. There were a number of us retired officers who banded together to get the job done. Col (Ret) Pat Lowrey became the editor and he essentially led the group; LTC (Ret) Al Grande had a print shop and we used to meet on his premises to plan and then print every edition; LTC (Ret) Loren Bush helped with the distribution; Col (Ret) Fitzsimons was our Treasures and LTC (Ret) Chase Maglin helped with the lay-out of the publication; my Roster was used to mail the publication to each identified MP Officer retiree wherever he or she lived. The Digest provided personality updates, assured that a yearly Reunion was publicized and acquired a new sponsor each year so that Reunions were held in varying cities throughout the US. Both Digest and Reunion were successful and their success was anchored on an accurate Roster for proper dissemination, which was my responsibility. I even ended up in charge of a Washington DC Reunion which turned out to be quite successful, since many of our retirees had worked in the DC area and were looking forward to return to their old stomping grounds.

Along the way, in 2008, I was inducted into the Military Police Hall of Fame. In the same year, I also became the Mount Vernon Citizen of the Year and Lord Fairfax. Another high spot were my invitations to come to Moscow, to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup>, 65<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Soviet and US Forces meeting at the Elbe River with all expenses paid by the Russian office of Chevron and the Russian government. I came to that honor because I had been there in 1945 and because one of my fellow retirees, LTC George told me and invited me to attend the yearly commemoration of the Elbe meeting at a marker in Arlington National Cemetery which was sponsored on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April by the Russian Ambassador. When I attended the first couple of years I noted that there was such a sparse attendance from the US side – only a few US veterans who were given some flowers by Russian school girls to be placed at the marker, while all the former Russian Republics, who were till on speaking terms with the Russians, laid wreaths. I wrote to Senator John Warner at the time to elicit more US participation – the Elbe meeting had,

of course two partners! While Senator Warner agreed with me, DOD was slow in acting. They sent one year a LTC from the Protocol Office, the next year a Colonel and the next a BG but never a wreath. Finally I decided to buy a wreath - not as big as the ones from the former Soviet Republics, but one marked from the 'US Military Retirees'. The Russians were appreciative and our US wreath came first in the sequence of placements. And thus I was invite to Moscow.

Now that I am 91 years old, I retired from being the Mount Vernon District Transportation Commissioner which made me travel to the city of Fairfax at night and I switched to serve again as the local Transportation Chair of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations. I also continue to be on the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Retiree Council. My circle of friends has gotten ever smaller, as so many of my friends have died, as did George and Paul who had attended my wedding and who had miraculously also relocated from NY to the DC area. Al Grande of the MP Digest fame remains my best friend and we get together weekly.

At this age, I have felt it imperative to relocate to a residential retirement community. We are about to sell our house where Paula and I have lived very comfortably for the past 42 years and we have negotiated a lease agreement with the Fairfax Retirement Community which caters to retired military officers.

Looking back, there is very little I would want to change. That I lived a good life, I have to first thank the heroic decision of my mother who brought me to the United States; and subsequently for the support I consistently received from the love of my life, my wonderful wife Paula, and from my dear daughter Laura, who now has moved to live and work in Florida. And as my final thought, I must admit that I have always believed that I owed my country a great debt for saving my family and me; I hope I have paid back some, since I could never achieve full payment for what was given. And in that spirit I can only repeat that which I have felt consistently for the past 78 years while under the umbrella of my country: "God Bless America!"

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